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A PHILOSOPHER'S ROMANCE.

CHAPTER VII.

By ten o'clock the next morning I was standing at the stout iron-locked gates of the Countess Wippach's garden, and had given the bell such a pull that its echoes jangled quite fiercely under the arched entrance, on each side of which were the gardener's rooms, thus enabling that individual with the aid of his family to act as door-keeper or *portinaio*, an important post in Soloporto.

Presently the tiny square hole which served for the inspection of visitors was filled by that part of the human face which contains the eyes, and a moment after, with a great sound of unlocking, the small wicket in the big gate swung open and I stepped inside. I wore my workday clothes and my most professional air, as I produced a pair of newly mended boots.

"I have brought these home for the cook; I suppose I can take them up to the house?"

The old gardener eyed me crabbedly and I thought doubtfully. "I'd best take them myself," he grumbled; "the Countess is never pleased to see such folk near the house."

I felt rather nonplussed, but it would never do to seem so, nor to try to force my way, which might have aroused suspicion. "As you please," I said carelessly; "be kind enough to say that the mending costs one florin and twenty-five *soldi*."

He went off muttering to himself,

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and I lingered near the open door of the cottage where his wife was washing, determined not to have had my long hot walk for nothing. The garden-wall was high, but I noticed that fruit trees were trained against it for nearly its whole length, so that, provided anyone had assistance in scaling it outside, he could get down inside easily enough. If therefore Thomas Willoughby wanted to go in for the medieval plan of carrying off his lady-love, the plum and apricot trees would be exceedingly handy. Having completed a careful and dignified survey of that part of the garden within sight,—for the grounds were very extensive, and the house at some distance,—I condescended to open a conversation with the old woman, who was washing close by. "A big place your husband has to look after," I began, "and well he does it."

"You may say that," she answered, pausing thankfully enough for a gossip; "you may say that. He works hard enough too, I can tell you, though of course he has many to help him."

"Does he now?" I said with some show of interest. "But very likely the Countess makes a good mistress. I'm told she is rich."

"It isn't the richest folks that part easiest with their money," said the wrinkled creature, putting her hands into the suds again. "The Countess is well enough, but it's little beyond his regular wages that my old man gets."

"Well, but visitors now," I sug-

gested; "no one goes away without remembering the *portinaio*."

"Don't they?" she snapped. "Well, no later than this blessed morning itself we were forgotten by visitors."

"Very mean," I remarked, opening my ears.

"And my husband sitting up late to let the carriage in after the theatre," she went on, "Heaven knows how many times! and then the old woman drives away without so much as a look at him,—bad luck go with her red nose," she concluded shrilly.

I remembered Carlo's description, the old Aunt, who is frightful and has a red nose, is called Bianca. "What sort of people could they have been?" I said wonderingly.

"None o' this country's getting," said the old woman. "There are handsome folk and ugly too here, as there are everywhere, but I never saw one so ugly and another so handsome as those two."

"What two?" I asked.

"Why the two ladies that went away this morning by the early train."

My heart sank,—I was too late! "Where were they going to?" I asked.

"How should I know? I know nothing of any other place than this. They went and left me nothing to remember them by, such like people are best forgotten—" and she began her washing once more.

By this time I saw her husband again approaching the gates, swinging the boots on their return journey which I had fully anticipated. "They belong to nobody here," he cried angrily, almost throwing them at me. "Take 'em away and let me shut the gates; I've no time to waste over people's boots," and he slammed and locked the little iron door after me with a vicious energy which I suppose resulted from his ill-temper at having been forgotten by the departed visitors.

I confess that my spirits were some-

what cast down upon my return walk. What should I say to Thomas? Just as I got into the town who should I run against but Carlo, the *servo di piazza* I had met outside the theatre on the previous evening. He grinned when he saw me. "So yonder pretty bird has flown, Signor Pepe?"

"Indeed," I said with as much nonchalance as I could assume; "and where might she have flown to?"

Carlo, however, was an old hand at the game we were playing and knew how to profit by his opportunities. "What will you pay for the information?" he asked.

"How am I to know that you know what you say?" I said. "It is easy work to tell the name of one town or another."

"I had business at the station this morning," said Carlo, "and I saw the tickets taken. Of course I can't tell you whether they used the tickets or threw them away."

"Where did they book to?" I asked, producing two florins which I had provided in case the gardener might prove useful or communicative.

"Zia Bianca took tickets for Venice," answered Carlo, pocketing the coins and turning away with a whistle.

This chance encounter, which had resulted in such an important clue, cheered me up a little as I tramped along the dusty road leading to Thomas's *campagna*, where we had agreed it would be safer to discuss matters, as eavesdroppers are numerous in *cafés* and such places. I found my friend walking impatiently up and down the broad gravelled terrace in front of the door; Peter, evidently much disgusted at rapid exercise in such a prescribed area, had retired to the doorstep where he sat watching his master with strong disapproval.

"Well, what news?" asked Wiloughby pausing.

"Not altogether good," I answered, to prepare him.

"Out with it," he said, assuming that look of intense determination which became him so well.

"Signorina Iridé has gone."

His face fell ever so little. "Where to?" he asked briefly.

"By a lucky chance I find that tickets were taken to Venice by the early express this morning," I answered.

"There's a fast boat to Venice to-night,—no by Jove there isn't," he cried; "it is to-morrow night, and no decent train till this evening. Six or seven hours wasted—how on earth shall I get through the time?"

"It might be advisable if you considered what you mean to do when you are in Venice," I said drily. "You can't go off on a wild-goose chase like this without some plan. I know you will feel happier when you're on the move; but all the same you might give a second or two to thinking how you are to trace this girl."

"If she is in Venice I'll find her," he vowed energetically.

"It doesn't follow at all," said I. I felt it needful to calm him down a little for what would in all probability prove only a useless errand. "She may have re-booked at Venice, and never gone near the town at all, only passed through the station."

"It is not like you to be so discouraging," he said reproachfully.

"I don't wish to discourage you," I answered, feeling really sorry for him. "But what can be said? It is really a great chance if you ever do find her in Venice, but frankly it is the only clue we have. If you mean to go on with this business you must go to Venice."

"Exactly," he cried, "and yet you don't seem to be at all aware of the serious consequences that delay may involve."

"I am not suggesting that you

should delay," I said. "Take the next train by all means; but until that train goes, six hours hence, we may as well consider what you are to do when you arrive in Venice. Just think, if Signorina Iridé went on from Venice to some other place she has in all probability already gone; if not she can hardly leave before you arrive there late to-night." Thomas gave an impatient sigh, which acknowledged the justice of my remarks since he made no protest. So I went on: "First of all you had better make careful enquiry at the station itself, and if that fails, you——"

"If I can hear nothing at the station I shall sit all day long at the Café Florian, and if she is in Venice I shall sooner or later see her; everyone passes the Piazza St. Marco several times while they are in the town. If that fails——" he broke off dejectedly.

"Oh, that will succeed perhaps," I said. "Still, are you sure that you have looked well at both sides of the question? Are you sure that your trouble may not be thrown away? Perhaps she will have nothing to say to you."

This reflection, which I had made purposely to ease a disappointment should there be one in store for him, did not discourage him in the least. "It is possible of course," he answered, "but all the same I intend to try my luck. If I succeed, no trouble will seem too much. If I fail, well, I can only fail once."

We parted at the railway-station that evening with an agreement that he was to write and let me know how things progressed, and that if I heard nothing, no news was to mean good news.

Two days later I had my first letter. Enquiries at Venice had proved futile; either the ladies had gone on unobserved or they were still in Venice; therefore the routine of the Café Florian had been adopted, and after a few days' trial he would let me hear

the results. These, I was informed in a second letter a week later, were not satisfactory: Thomas appeared to have inspected all the visitors' books at all the hotels, but discovery, or even the slightest clue, was not forthcoming; and next ensued ten long days without a word or sign, though I had written twice during that period to beg for news. On the eleventh day I could stand it no longer, and made up my mind to set out for Venice myself to see how things were going, when it occurred to me to go up to Willoughby's *campagna* before starting to see if Wakefield had received later news than myself. I had hesitated a little about asking him, as he could not understand Italian, and neither he nor his master knew that I spoke or understood English; moreover I was not anxious to display my powers, which must I knew have become considerably impaired by want of use. Nothing, however, must stand between myself and my anxiety about my friend, so I resolved to tackle Wakefield, and began to practise the pronunciation of his name while walking out to the house. I could not master the word to my satisfaction, and arrived within sight of the gates without accomplishing anything better than *Wackfeel*, which however I felt was near enough for my purpose.

As I came up to the gate Wakefield was standing in the road just outside it, and apparently apostrophising a cloud of dust in the distance. He turned as I advanced. "*Boney Sarah!*" said he, which was all the Italian he knew. "Ah dear! if you only could understand Henglish now, you might be some 'elp, and 'elp it is we need—" he broke off these rather fragmentary remarks to shake his fist at the now distant dust which was caused by a carriage. "You 'ussey, you baggage, you——"

I felt, although bewildered, that

the present was an opportunity for making a favourable impression upon Wakefield, who it seemed to me had never thoroughly approved of my intimacy with his master. "Wackfeel," I began, "I can speak English; not well, for I have forgotten much that I once knew; but still I can understand and speak the language. What can I do and where is your master, and who has driven away in that carriage that you seem so angry with?"

"'Evins be praised!" he cried with real feeling. "Now 'Evins be praised! You come in the nick o' time, so to speak. My master's hupstairs ill in his bed, and that baggage of a 'ansom cook has just gone hoff because she thinks it's smallpox, and——"

I did not wait for more, but hurried through the garden followed by the servant. Peter, who was lying dejectedly on the mat at the door, rose with a subdued greeting and followed me upstairs.

There upon his bed lay my poor friend, his face deeply flushed and his eyes closed; he was breathing heavily and his restless fingers twitched and plucked feebly at the sheet. I laid my hand gently on his head; he was in a high fever, and when at my touch he opened his eyes I knew he did not really see me. It did not need the dull deep-coloured rash on his face to tell me the name of the awful malady that had smitten Thomas Willoughby; I had seen it a hundred times. Men and women and little children die of it sometimes by the score; it is the product of foul air and want of good food; it strikes down, sometimes within a day or two, many a poor half-starved adult or puny child, and then a few days, or a few hours, and all is over; there is one less in the damp and fetid alley, —one more in the graveyard. Nay, this plague may easily be conveyed to

those more fortunate, as in this instance, for in Italy it sometimes smites very sorely and scores may die in an epidemic, and the name of the scourge is typhus.

"What does the doctor say?" I asked Wakefield in a whisper. He had entered the room very softly and now stood beside me, looking at his master with real regard and something very like despair.

"He wouldn't 'ave no doctor," replied the man. "He was ill when he came back from Venice two days since, but not very bad, and didn't stay all day in bed. But he couldn't walk, and I know I posted a letter to you and wondered you never came to him."

If a letter is lost in the post it is certain to be an important one as in this instance; and I thanked the providence that had guided my steps to the *campagna* that afternoon. "Is there another servant in the house?" I asked.

"This hafternoon," began Wakefield, "I went to ask the cook where to find a doctor, for I didn't like the looks of Mr. Thomas and I saw he didn't understand me when I spoke, and that rash on 'im startled me, and I said to myself that's small-pox caught in some of these dirty foreign 'oles. So I went, as I say, to cook 'oo could make out a bit of English, an' the minute I says small-pox she giv a screech and ran upstairs and put some of 'er things in a bundle and hoff she goes; an' arf an hour since she come back in a cab and fetched away 'er box, and would scarcely trust 'erself in the 'ouse, nor speak to me, and what we are to do I really do not know. The 'ussey's afraid of spoiling 'er face with small-pox. 'Ansom is that 'ansom does, says I, and I only wish someone would spoil 'er beauty a bit, the ungrateful baggage," he concluded warmly.

"You stay here by your master," I

said, "and I will hurry to town and bring back a decent woman I know to help, and a doctor. Don't leave this room, Wackfeel; in a short hour I return, and we will look after him together."

"Mr. Romanner," said Wakefield gravely, "you are, Sir, indeed a friend in need, so to speak; and if you should hever need a friend indeed James Wakefield will be ready if chance affords, for I truly ham sorry for some wrong hideas I have 'ad about you, bein' a foreigner, for which I 'ave but poor respex."

He held out his hand at the conclusion of this rather involved sentence and I shook it. "Wackfeel," I said, "we are agreed. Together we will care for your master, and I will do all I can to give you assistance."

I ran most of the way to the nearest cab-stand and then drove to the best doctor I knew of, who was giving consultations but promised to accompany me to the *campagna* in a short half-hour. I then went on to the old house in the Ghetto where I had been lodging when I first met Thomas during the night of the Bora. The reader may remember a certain client of mine, by name Teresa, who had lent me the end of candle to illuminate the contents of the little parcel I had found. Luckily she was at home, and at once agreed to return with me and undertake, for at any rate a week or two, the needful cooking and housework. On my way back I called for the Doctor, and was hailed with great joy by Wakefield who looked out of the open window of his master's room as we drove up.

"He is very ill," said the Doctor gravely; "the fever has a great hold on him; but he is young and may perhaps have the strength to live through it. How did he take the disease?"

"He has been lately in Venice," was my answer, "but——"

"For that matter he might catch it by chance anywhere," said the Doctor; "it is only too common. Plenty of fresh air, some soup, a little opiate if he is restless—I can say no more. To-morrow at this hour I will return; but if you see any change you will call me at once."

I translated all these remarks for Wakefield's benefit; and then it was arranged between us that he should take charge of the patient until two in the morning, and that I should then relieve him until nine when he would have had some hours' rest.

I smoked a sad and lonely cigarette that night in Thomas's garden, and Peter with listless tail and drooping ears kept me company; the sagacious beast understood the position of affairs well enough, and mourned accordingly, and I was thankful not to be quite solitary. When I threw myself upon Wakefield's bed to take what rest I might my sleep was very fitful and interrupted, and I started wide awake in an instant when my fellow-watcher touched me on the arm with a whispered "Mr. Romanner."

I had kicked off my shoes, and now stole noiselessly into the sick-room. The jalousies were closed, but through the open windows one could see that the full moon still flooded the hot and breathless night, though her rays were beginning to pale in the first faint glimmer of the growing dawn. A carefully-shaded night-light, in a basin on the floor, cast big shadows over the room, making the aspect of every-day things seem strange and unreal; a large moth fluttered audibly outside against the closed jalousies,—I could hear the beat of its powdered wings; a frog croaked loudly in the garden, and some kind of night cricket was making a dry whirring noise that stopped suddenly every now and then, and began again with equally unlooked-for suddenness. And there on the bed lay

the motionless form of Thomas Willoughby; his eyes were half open, and he moaned faintly every now and then, but my precautions against the least noise were needless, for he was now nearly deaf. Ah, it was a pitiful thing to see him there, all his youth and strength and comeliness clutched in the fell grasp of the terrible disease! He who so short a time ago set forth hopefully on his quest, and now——

Truly we mortals make great boast of the mind and of its triumph over matter; and yet it was terrifying to think how the same mind that only a few hours back had nursed but one idea, the same heart that but a short day before had held but one image, was now crushed within the coils of a sickness that, apparently at least, affected the mental part of man through the material, and plunged its poisoned fang into his very moral essence. Where was the wandering spirit of the man before me? What had become of his craving to pursue the beauty on which he had set his mind? Where was his remembrance of the loveliness whose perfection had first touched his heart? Was that marred mask on the pillow really the same finely featured face that had reflected the determination of his words "I intend to marry that woman"? Could that deaf and almost sightless object really be my handsome, careless, undaunted friend?

And yet, while my eyes shrank from this sad sight, my whole heart went out in friendship to the man who lay thus helpless and disfigured. There are those who dare to say that the human body encloses no undying essence, no spirit, formless yet all pervading, that exists entirely apart from the mortal shape that wraps it round; there are men who deny the soul; and of such I would ask, what remained now in Thomas Willoughby to attract me? Why was my friend more deeply valued at this perilous

moment than ever before? And I will answer,—for no scoffer's lips can frame a reply—I will answer that in that terrible hour only the sense of soul was left, and though my ready feet and my willing hands might avail nothing, yet that bodily helplessness recognised the supreme power of something beyond and above itself,—of something subtle, invisible, yet unchanged by the calamity that had wrought havoc upon the flesh. And this phenomenon,—call it what you will—this mental communion is the divine heritage of man, handed down to innumerable generations through æons of time, the birthmark of immortality, of existence apart from the body that perishes.

Slowly the hours passed away, and slowly the dawn crept up the sky while I kept my lonely watch. There was little to do, nothing that could bring sight to those dim eyes, nor hearing to those sealed ears; there was none who might heal save Time, whose hands bring bane as well as balm, whose footsteps may herald Death as well as Life.

CHAPTER VIII.

For the next fortnight the sun rose and set, and the moon came and went; I ate and drank mechanically at intervals without any sense of satisfaction; I smoked twice a day without enjoyment; I slept without resting. The Doctor came regularly and pronounced words that meant nothing more than that his patient was still alive, that no skill could avail anything, and that all depended upon the strength and constitution of the sufferer; if these sufficed he would live; if not—the Doctor shrugged his shoulders, not unkindly, but merely as indicating his own helplessness. To chronicle these hours of light and darkness would mean nothing to the

reader, and be but wearisome repetition. I pass on to the fourteenth day after my arrival, which was marked by a letter from Thomas Willoughby's mother, dated from a hotel on the south coast of England. Wakefield suggested that I had better read it, and we would then consult as to the expediency of sending news of her son, which had hitherto been impossible since she was travelling and we had no fixed address to write to. The letter was in the ordinary strain in which an affectionate woman addresses her son; it was short, asked for news of him, and was signed *Cyrilla Willoughby*. The Doctor arrived just as I had finished reading it. After a very brief inspection of the patient he turned to me.

"At present there is no change," he said, "but during the next twelve hours there must be one, for better or for worse. This is the fifteenth day of the illness, and within the next few hours he will live or die. Send for me if you think it needful, but frankly I can do nothing. I cannot save him if he is to die, nor help him if he is to live. In these cases Nature does her own work; we must stand aside."

All that day I never stirred from the bed-side. Wakefield and I at intervals administered the strong soup which Teresa prepared, and did our best to prepare the almost worn out body for the struggle before it. Sometimes I used to fancy Thomas knew me, or was in some way conscious of my presence, but perhaps this after all was only imagination. I sat by the bed as the hours passed by, and looked with unseeing eyes at the trifles near me on the table; things that had become so familiar,—a dressing-case covered with stout English leather, an ivory paper-knife of that solid kind of which blade and handle are sliced out of one tusk, a blotting-

pad with heavy silver corners, Wil-loughby's watch, which I had kept wound for him, and close to this his mother's letter. As I noticed it and remarked in an absent way the precise curves of the handwriting, the lady's name came back to my memory, and I discovered why it had seemed already known to me. Long years before, when I had been pursuing my dreary education in England, one of the few bright niches in my recollection was filled by a child called Cyrilla; it is an unusual name, and I had remembered it long after more important things were forgotten. Little Cyrilla was only six years old when I ran away to Paris just before my twenty-first birthday. It was years since I had thought of her: but the once familiar name had quickened my memory, and again I beheld the bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked little English girl who, whatever might be the case with others, had always been fond of her Italian cousin. There had been a peculiar attraction about this little maid, whose winning ways softened even her stern, proud grandmother, Lady Elizabeth, my aunt, she who had provoked me into running away,—a step which, with all the fulness of experience behind me, I can honestly say that I have never regretted. And as I mused on those long past times I wondered if the little Cyrilla I had known was still alive, and whether she became like her grandmother as she grew up, or whether,—and here my reflections were interrupted by Wakefield who came quietly into the room from the studio, which he was dusting and setting in order.

"Hanny change yet, Mr. Roman-ner?" he asked, a duster under one arm, and a large book upon which he had been operating in his hand.

"No, no change yet, Wackfeel," I answered.

The man came a little nearer and

looked compassionately at his master to whom he was sincerely attached. "Poor Mr. Thomas!" he said, shaking his head. "This comes of living in foreign 'oles and corners, which I 'ave hoften said was uncertain for a continuance. And 'im with a good 'ome too all ready for 'im! See 'ere, Mr. Romanner," he continued opening the book, which was one with card-board leaves for mounting photographs, "see 'ere; now 'ow can Mr. Thomas leave a place like that to come to this houtlandish country?"

He opened the book as he spoke and placed it in my hands. For a second my sight seemed playing me tricks, and I felt a little giddy; then I recovered my self-possession before Wakefield had noticed anything amiss. There was no doubt about it; the home which was now Thomas Wil-loughby's had once been my home too! There was the square-built solid English mansion, with its avenue, its ordered range of stabling and out-buildings, its lawns and flower-beds; there were the windows of the drawing-room where Lady Elizabeth had been sitting at our last interview; there was the garden where Cyrilla used to make daisy-chains; there were the entrance-gates through which I had fled one gray morning, vowing never to pass them again, and as I looked at the photograph I remembered how the raindrops had hung in a trembling fringe from the iron bars. In a flash the whole picture came before my eyes, the misty weather, the leafless trees, the sodden leaves underfoot that muffled the tread, the dismal road with its ruts and puddles. And then I came back to the present, and looked at the bed by which I sat tending Cyrilla's son!

Wakefield turned from his mournful contemplation of his master and spoke again, as I closed the book and laid it down. "It's my belief," he began

mysteriously, "it's my belief, Mr. Romanner, that my poor master is going to die in a foreign land, as 'appened afore to two o' the family. My father was coachman to Mr. Thomas's grandmother, an' I've 'eard 'im tell of a nephew of 'ers, a queer-lookin' young gentleman by all accounts an' queer in 'is ways too, but what could you expect? 'E was only 'arf an Englishman, for 'is father, Lady Elizabeth's young brother, run away to Hitaly and never came back, an' married a furrin wife, this boy's mother. One day 'e ran away too, and came to no good! I've bin told,—very likely 'e died of this hawful feivour too—I can't say, but 'e was never 'eard of again; 'e went the way of his father; an' now 'ere's my master must try 'is luck instead of stoppin' at 'ome and——" Wakefield broke off at this point, and hastily returned into the next room, where I heard him blow his nose with great vigour.

I will pass over the next few hours, during which the condition of the sick man absorbed the whole attention both of myself and his servant. Towards night he seemed to grow calmer, and about ten o'clock Wakefield, quite worn out, went to rest on a couch in the next room, I promising to call him if needful. Time passed and the atmosphere grew dull and heavy; I opened the jealousies and through the dim ghostly light, which means darkness in the summer, I seemed to perceive numbers of unaccustomed shadows, formless, aimless, motionless, while across the space of sullen air without floated the deep boom of the old bell of St. Giusto as it chimed two. For a moment I turned from the window and laid my hand upon Willoughby's fevered wrist; the pulse was rapid, yet its vibrations suddenly struck me as weaker, while a change seemed gather-

ing on his face; I moistened his parted lips, and turned again to the window with a heavy heart, for I feared the worst. Outside, in the dim strange solitude of night, darkness and dawn strove together. It was that mysterious hour when life is at its lowest ebb, when the weak are weakest and the strong least powerful, when humanity is swept into that mystic pause of time betwixt yesterday and to-morrow. Out in the garden a sudden chill rolled upon the air, a faint whisper among the motionless trees died away into a rigid silence; there was not a sound in the world, and as I looked once more towards the bed, I saw that the wasted restless fingers of the man who lay there were still, and that his muttering lips had ceased to move. Again I felt his wrist, and the pulse was weaker still; could he live through the next few moments, or would he drift away to the tideless ocean of the unknown on that strange current of force that was affecting half the globe?

I shivered, while far in the eastern sky the palest glimmer of pearl crept upon the shroud of night, parting its close folds with soft insistence, growing every moment more beautiful and strong, moving with tender luminous fingers about the dark pall of heaven, where the stars shone but dimly in the gathering radiance that was now flushed with rose. The pale moon withered and went out; a deep breathing sense of growth and life was abroad; the mignonette below exhaled a sudden fragrance; a swallow gave one sleepy twitter under the eaves. Again I turned to the bed, and again my fingers closed on Willoughby's wrist; the pulse was stronger, and was it my fancy that the worn-out look upon his face was more restful and his breathing more regular? Shaking with excitement I tried to control myself,

and looking at the time I forced myself to sit down in a chair, and watch carefully for half an hour before daring to hope, lest my overwrought nerves might be deceiving me. Nature was kind; my self-imposed task, whose duration I anticipated with dread, became easy and short, gradually an irresistible sleep stole over me and I suppose my head must have bowed forward on to the bedside whence I raised it in much bewilderment at the sound of Wakefield's whisper. "Mr. Romanner, look there!"

I was staring stupidly at the servant, and his words told me nothing, while his strained voice might have portended the best or the worst. For an instant I dared not turn my head,—I, the sleeper at his post, the faithless guardian! What if the last sigh had flickered from Willoughby's lips while I slept, what if his hand had vainly felt for mine as its last touch with earth? For the brief second during which these ideas flashed through my mind I lived through a very agony of terror; then I looked, and at the first mere glance my fears fled. I was no doctor, but the physician's skill was not needed to see that the sick man's breath came and went regularly in a deep sleep, little resembling the torpor in which he had been previously sunk, while the fingers, so lately moving to and fro in such unpurposed fashion, lay motionless and relaxed like those of a child at rest. In all human probability Thomas Willoughby's life was to be spared.

The Doctor's visit an hour later confirmed my impressions, and poor Wakefield would have danced a jig for joy if he had been less English and respectable; but as things were he only heaved a deep sigh of thankfulness and said "That's a

good job," which from him meant a good deal.

That afternoon, at my suggestion, he devoted some time to the composition of a letter to Mrs. Willoughby. He had suggested that I should undertake this letter, but I refused, telling him that my English was hardly equal to the task, and moreover that Mrs. Willoughby would probably feel far more reassured by news from one personally known to her. I offered, however, to copy his epistle for him and address it if he liked, and this offer he gladly accepted. I left him therefore engrossed in composition at his master's bedside, while I returned for an hour to the garden to smoke and to meditate upon many things which had been crowding my brain for several hours, but which my anxiety had forbidden to obtrude themselves.

The reader must not suppose that I had listened quite unmoved to Wakefield's succinct account of my own career in England, as of "a queer-looking young gentleman" of whom little good could be expected because "he was only arf an Englishman." On the contrary, my blood had grown hot over the recital which the loquacity of the servants' hall had perpetuated; and if Thomas Willoughby's condition at that moment had not rendered all demonstration impossible I might have spoken words which I should have regretted, and which would have enlightened Wakefield upon a subject which subsequent reflection showed me was best ignored. Granted that I knew myself without any manner of doubt to be kin to Thomas Willoughby, whose grandmother had been my own cousin, what was to be gained by disclosing the fact? At present the pleasure of my friendship with this young man had been greatly founded upon the fact that he had,

of his own free will and without effort on my part, sought to know me, and had bestowed his confidence from choice. If he knew, or even suspected that I had any claim upon him, even that slender one of recognition as akin, all the delight of my present intercourse must cease for me; and seeing our respective positions my friend might feel bound to extend to a relative offers of a financial nature which I should have scorned and which would have entirely upset the basis of our connection. The whole discovery, owing to my rather intimate acquaintance with this young Englishman, seemed to me so natural, I knowing myself to be what I was, that I could not help wondering that no inkling of the truth had ever occurred to me before. Recalling previous conversations I remembered that Thomas had more than once referred to that member of his own family who, when thwarted in a natural desire to see something of the world, had proceeded to run away in order to satisfy his curiosity, and I was astonished that the subject had awakened no suspicion in me. There are, however, innumerable families who can boast of a n'er-do-weel in their ranks,—perhaps there are few who have not contained this very ordinary person—and I saw no object to be gained by proving my own identity. On the contrary, a very strong reason for keeping my secret presented itself very shortly to my mind.

To ignore or conceal the sowing of wild oats is partially possible, but to apply the same process to a distinct crime is called, and treated as, compounding a felony. As you have already heard, all the years that had elapsed since last I had set eyes on Moses Lazarich had not sufficed to deaden the smart of his injuries; the

improbability of tracing the man did not lull my keen thirst for revenge, which was indeed rather whetted by the possible chance of my meeting with him on any day or at any moment. I might die with my vengeance unsated, or within an hour my knife might be in the Jew's heart! And it was this ignorance which helped to preserve my undying sense of wrong, my bitter hatred, my unsatisfied longing. No obstacle, I had sworn, should stand between me and my desire; and was it likely that I should interpose one of my own free will! Pepe Romagno might murder and be hanged or imprisoned, without any sense of a relative's disgrace attaching to Thomas Willoughby; but if Joseph Egerton (as I had once been called) killed Lazarich the usurer, Thomas would feel the reflection of the crime; for in such matters a man's family is a mirror from which, helpless to resist, are reflected the doings, good or evil, of one of its members.

Whether owing to the strain upon my nerves during the past fortnight, or whether because I had begun to dwell upon the thought of Lazarich, I know not, but I felt one of my fits of murderous passion coming over me, such as I had not experienced for some time,—not indeed since the day when at Miramar I had met the strange woman who had answered me so aptly. The thought of her flashed through my mind as I rose and went out of the garden on to the high road where I might walk more freely, for the narrow bounds of the shrubbery tortured me with a sense of enclosure. I set off at a quick pace along the dusty track and had soon put a fair distance between myself and the furthest cluster of workmen's cottages, where dwelt a colony of washerwomen and of stone-masons employed in the limestone quarries that scarred the grim mountain flanks above and

beyond the town. The road rose in a gradual sweep with many windings hereabouts, and from it one might look down on the mass of roofs and domes and towers that composed this aspect of Soloporto, beyond which a broad opalescent belt of sea stretched to the horizon. Immediately below the spot where I was standing a handful of small houses formed a tiny village, from which a zigzag and precipitous footpath ascended to the road, here partly supported and banked up by a space of walling. The edge of the road was in fact only protected from the steep declivity by low stone posts set at regular and not too frequent intervals.

I stared at the great town below me, the swarming hum of whose habitations came to my ears even at that distance, for the air was still and clear, and I wondered if any house therein held my enemy, if he might lie under one of those roofs. It seems strange that man with all his powers and passions, with all the intensity of his loves and longings and hates, cannot for all their force penetrate for one instant into the unknown to wrest therefrom the secret he burns to fathom. Perhaps, all unsuspecting, I had many times passed the Jew in the streets of Soloporto or elsewhere, or even been his ignorant neighbour; and yet,—could such a thing be? If we were ever to meet would not the magnetism of my hate deliver him into my hands? Could I fail to see and know the man I had so long sought and sought in vain; could my hand roll a cigarette, or ply the tailor's needle, if my enemy's throat were within reach? I clenched my fist at the thought, and as I did so I felt a touch on my arm, and heard a voice speaking—

"Yea, you are right,—one thrust and it would be over! We will do it together."

I turned suddenly, and met the dark, baleful, sunken eyes of the maniac I had seen at Miramar. She said no more, but I felt her look sink deep into my very inmost consciousness that no word might touch or probe; I felt those vengeful eyes recognise the subtle kinship of evil, and I knew that her passion waxed in the knowledge. I was rooted to the spot by something not unlike fear, for we in Italy are not ignorant of familiar spirits and strange apparitions that may, and do sometimes, haunt a mortal. Was it, could it be that my hideous, irresistible, cherished scheme of revenge had taken mortal shape and showed itself thus, strange and terrible! As this thought surged over me I made an instinctive movement away from my companion, who swiftly and easily, as if well accustomed to it, began to descend the steep goat's path, which I have already described and which here reached the level of the road. I watched her, feeling spell-bound, watched till her shabby, dusty black raiment became a mere dark moving spot in the plain below; and then with trembling limbs I made the best of my way back to the *campagna*.

I am free to confess that this meeting startled me not a little; the coincidence seemed almost too extraordinary to be the result of mere chance, and thence rose the suspicion that this apparent maniac must be the product of my own brain, disordered at such times by the influence of my ungovernable rage and hatred. When I remembered the battery at Miramar and my subsequent description of this woman to the gardener, the latter was by no means sure he had seen her, but only recollected a person of similar appearance who might, or might not have been the mad creature I had met. What if until my vengeance was consummated I was doomed to be thus haunted? What if those deep

eyes, sombre with hate, were to glare suddenly into mine when my prey was marked down, and bid me see the hideousness of my desire! And yet, could this thing be! There are unfortunately plenty of women suffering under a sense of injury more or less just, and many a woman has ere now taken her own means of restoring the balance of sorrow and pain. Doubtless the present was a case in point; or perhaps even this was too extreme a supposition, and the poor creature was only a lunatic. As I walked on, and began to feel my equanimity somewhat restored, the ghastly idea I had at first conceived began gradually to fade from my mind as absurd, and the English half of me, always the slowest to assert itself and the most persistent when yielded to, assured me that my imagination had been playing me tricks.

By the time I arrived at the *campagna* again I was comparatively calm, and the sight of familiar surroundings tended still further to give a sense of distance to my late impressions. Peter stood at the gate wagging his tail, and we passed between the dusty trees and up the winding path together; I had been absent longer than I intended, and now hastened indoors to relieve Wakefield's watch.

He was still sitting at the table as I had left him, with writing-materials and a whole array of letter-paper in front of him, and was reading over with much apparent satisfaction the epistle he had just completed, and which I was to copy and address. He rose as I came in, handed me the sheet of somewhat laboured writing, and then hastened downstairs upon an errand for the invalid.

I took his place and had soon finished my part of the business and addressed the letter, which ran as follows. I took the liberty of correcting the spelling, also the punctuation,

and of removing many superfluous capital letters.

MRS. WILLOUGHBY, Madam,

I takes my pen to inform you that Mr. Thomas has lately enjoyed but very poor health having been nearly dead of typhus fever, but is now recovering, and the Doctor says will do well. I have been greatly obliged by a foreign gentleman, a friend of Mr. Thomas, Mr. Romanner, who has helped with the nursing, and spoke the language for me. He is still here, and I must beg, Madam, that you are not too anxious for Mr. Thomas who has begun to sleep well. I hope, however, that soon my master may come home, for these foreign places, I say with all respects, are not healthy nor fit to live in. I will write and say how Mr. Thomas goes on, and will now conclude with my respects.

Your obedient,
JAMES WAKEFIELD.

CHAPTER IX.

THOMAS WILLOUGHBY made very rapid progress towards recovery, and having an excellent constitution, and the advantage of only five and twenty years' wear of it, had no relapses. He ate like a wolf, and Teresa's soups became positively terrific in strength, though even they had shortly to be supplemented by more solid fare. The Doctor's visits were now merely a question of form, and his conversation with his patient had degenerated into polite remarks about the weather and kindred harmless topics. I was beginning to think that my friend had forgotten all about Iridé, of whom he had never spoken to me during the whole time of his illness; even in his occasional delirious hours I had never been able to catch her name among those that he sometimes murmured. I held my peace therefore, and was only too thankful to think that this wild-goose chase after a lovely face was presumably abandoned; but I soon discovered my mistake.

One morning when the Doctor came,

and Thomas, already promoted to the sofa, had concluded his usual remarks about the heat and the dew and so forth, he suddenly asked a question: "How soon do you think I shall be fit to travel?"

"Well, that rather depends upon the length of your journey. No doubt in a couple of months you will be fit to go to England." The physician, like most foreigners, regarded such a journey as the longest any one could wish to make. "But," he added, "in one month I daresay you might have a short change to some place nearer at hand," and he took his leave.

Wakefield had been in the room during this colloquy, and having opened the door for the Doctor, returned with a most satisfied expression on his face. "I'm sure I'm glad to 'ear, Sir, that you are thinking of going 'ome." There was no answer, but I fancied that his master assumed rather an obstinate look. "Maybe you would like me to be putting some of the things together," continued Wakefield. "There's that there devil-ware from China takes a lot o' careful packin'." Thomas had secured some admirable specimens of dragon porcelain during his sojourn in the East, but Wakefield could never remember its correct name. "I could begin this afternoon, Sir, if you like; there'll be a lot to do before all's ready."

"You can pack the devil-ware at once if you choose, Wakefield," said Willoughby, "but you have plenty of time before you; there is no need to hurry. I am not going to start for England yet. I am not quite so fond of my own country as you are; but if you don't care to stay here any longer you can go back, you know, and return to me when I am in England again."

Poor Wakefield was evidently much disappointed, but stood his ground manfully. "Mr. Thomas, Sir," he began, "I've served you hever since you was a boy, and it's 'ardly likely

as I should leave you when you are in an un-olesome foreign place, where there ain't no decent servants to be got. Hall I begs to say, Sir, with respects, is that you will be far better in 'ealth and prospex in Hengland;" and with that the man disappeared with some clothes to brush.

Thomas Willoughby laughed. "Poor Wakefield!" he said, "he must really be very fond of me to endure this stay abroad; he thinks there is no place like England."

"But when do you propose to return?" I asked. "Mrs. Willoughby seems naturally anxious about you, and——"

"I am not going back to England," said Thomas doggedly, "until I have found Iridé."

Alas! All my hopes were shattered and I spoke in haste: "Then you will probably remain abroad all your life!"

"Perhaps," he answered tranquilly; "there is no telling."

"I thought you were going to have your future wife selected for you by your mother," I said with a spice of malice.

"I was of that opinion at one time," he said calmly; "but that was before I had any idea how easy it was to choose a wife. I am quite ashamed now to think that I ever imagined I could require any assistance about such a simple thing."

"In the meantime," I said, "how do you propose to bring about a meeting between Signorina Iridé and yourself? Your visit to Venice seems to have been fruitless."

"It was," he said, "quite fruitless, except that I am convinced she was not in Venice at that time, but must have gone on from there to some other place, without staying. Never mind, I shall find her some day."

He was still, of course, weak from illness and I did not therefore press

the matter further, for I could only have pointed out the hopelessness of such a quest as he contemplated, and I did not want to depress him. How much easier it was in medieval times for the knight to ride forth in quest of his ladylove. That tiresome invention the railway could not then bear her from him at the rate, even in Italy, of some twenty miles an hour, quite as long a distance as any respectable damsel might cover on her palfrey in a whole day's journey. Then the knight enquired at hostels and such like places, where news was sure to await him, and finally he generally came up with his adored and her party in time to rescue them single-handed from a gang of outlaws. Now-a-days the knight races after the lady on the railway, the same manner of transit as she has herself adopted; there are no more fiery steeds or ambling palfreys, and the noble profession of highwayman is confined to Whitechapel and the Old Kent Road in London, I am told, though on the Continent there are still some respectable brigands at large in Corsica and Greece. Yet in spite of the romantic surroundings amid which in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the lover conducted his affairs, he was animated by sensations precisely similar to those of Thomas Willoughby in the nineteenth century. For the core of humanity is ever the same, though certain of the more nebulous virtues and vices may be in or out of fashion, may change or renew themselves in different channels. The deep bases of human nature have never altered; love calls to the men and women of to-day as he called to Paris and Dante, to Cleopatra and to Cressida; Don Quixote riding for the Lady Dulcinea was not more in earnest than Thomas Willoughby buying a railway-ticket to Venice. In the change of surroundings we are too apt to discern a change

of sentiment, and hence arise some of the false calculations of character which, when exposed, bring surprise to him who has conceived them. Nay, if by any chance the chivalry or persistent devotion of the Middle Ages insists upon occasionally finding a counterpart in these modern times we ridicule instead of applauding. We forget the single aim, the unswerving courage, the reverence for women, the gentle heart of the Knight of La Mancha, and remember only that he charged windmills and was grievously mauled by cats. When we call one of our ken Don Quixote it is not meant to commemorate the Spanish hero's virtues but his failings, for vices he had none. Alas! with all our boasted advance in art, science, and literature it is a poor thing that we so easily forget the virtues of our ancestors, and that we congratulate ourselves upon our greater enlightenment by ridiculing the exaggerations which were sometimes born of their honest hearts.

In the meantime here was a modern knight-errant with all the wide world before him as the field for his quest after the lady of his heart, yet, with all respect for the advantages of modern civilisation, it must be conceded that in some respects the medieval knight had a greater scope for his powers. If any one suggested that the lady in question was not the most peerless of her kind her admirer killed or injured the wretch, and thus worked off a little of his superfluous energy, and kept himself in trim for the final tournament or fight for the bride. But poor Willoughby, too weak as yet for active measures, yet strong enough to fret under his enforced quietude, could find no vent for his energy, and therefore became exceedingly irritable, a strange condition for his blithe and hopeful nature. He tried hard to quarrel with me on a

variety of subjects, and I was really beginning to seriously consider the advisability of again repairing to my own quarters, when I was fortunate enough to suggest a diversion which completely changed the aspect of affairs.

"Why don't you go back to your palette and brushes?" I said at last one day when he grew weary of a French novel and pitched it across the room with a strong interjection. "Try a little painting; I will sit to you with pleasure if you like." He said nothing but looked rather more approachable. "Until you are strong enough to travel all over Italy and explore every likely corner after Signorina Iridé, which I am quite aware you intend to do," I continued, "you might occupy yourself by painting something. I would suggest a subject which might be possibly construed as prophetic; Perseus and Andromeda, for instance; the dragon can resemble Zia Bianca who is frightful and has a red nose."

He did not answer me directly, but got up and went into the next room, where I heard sounds which convinced me that he was rummaging his portfolio and looking up his brushes. I congratulated myself privately upon having prompted these proceedings, but I said nothing, only contriving to be absent on business during the greater part of the next day; and when I returned towards evening I was able to see with great surprise a study already begun of the subject I had recommended more as a joke than anything else. The canvas was, of course, still in a very chaotic state, but the relative positions of Perseus, Andromeda, and a monster made of intricate convolutions, could be clearly distinguished. In a day or two the artist became so interested in his picture that his temper perceptibly improved, to the great relief both of

Wakefield and myself; after a week's work, during the course of which he had devoted himself almost entirely to Andromeda, Thomas had produced a more than recognisable likeness of Signorina Iridé.

"It is really very good," I said critically looking over his shoulder on the eighth day of his labour; "the resemblance is quite unmistakeable."

"I can't get on with Perseus," he grumbled, squinting along his brush at the damsel fettered to the rock; "I must have someone to sit for him. I can easily paint my own face on to someone else's body. Can't you find me an able-bodied young man of decent proportions who would be content to earn a florin or two by doing nothing? An Italian for choice,—they can always sit still."

"When do you want him, and for how long?" I asked.

"Oh! say a week at any rate for three hours a day."

I promised to do my best, and inspected several individuals the next day, but none realised my idea of the bodily proportions of a Perseus. I was taking my *siesta* in the cool shade of Luigi Fascinato's shop opposite the Canale Grande when an idea occurred to me. It was again the season of onions and water-melons, and the Stella del Mare was lying within a few yards. I got up and went at once on board, where Toni Capello lay in his usual graceful attitude doing literally nothing at all, but then certainly that was allowable during the hour for *siesta*.

"Toni," I began, plunging at once into my business, "how would you like to earn some money very easily indeed?"

"I am quite content with what I have, Signor Pepe," answered the master of the Stella del Mare tranquilly. "I have enough for Nina and the *bambino* and more I really do not care for."

"Is Nina with you?" I enquired.

"No, we feared the heat for the little one; she stays at Ancona," said her husband, not I thought without satisfaction.

"If Nina were here she would tell you to make money whenever you can, Toni," I said. "Just think, you might easily earn enough to take a new frock home for the *bambino*, and a silk handkerchief for Nina, and perhaps——"

"What do you wish me to do?" asked Toni coming to the point, for, idle as he himself undoubtedly was, he had strong affections and was devoted to his wife and baby.

"I only wish you to sit still for a short time every day for a week," I answered. "I have an acquaintance, a certain Englishman, who wishes to draw a fine young man, and I ventured to suggest to my friend that you would quite fulfil the condition."

Toni moved his handsome limbs into a sitting posture and looked at me with some approval; he was by no means insensible to his own good looks. "I know what you mean," he said with more animation. "My wife's brother-in-law's sister's cousin did the same thing in Naples once for a painter there, who was also an Englishman. Well, since it will certainly pay for a present for Nina and the baby I will consent to oblige you, Signor Pepe. Only I do not know if I can come every day for a whole week. I shall perhaps only be four or five days here this trip. However, we will see."

I took Toni Capello up to the *campagna* with me that afternoon to see if he would answer to the artist's idea of a Perseus. Thomas was in the garden when we arrived. "Is this Perseus, Signor Pepe?" he said with interest.

"Your servant, Sir," said Toni, baring his head and bowing with the inimitable grace of an Italian peasant.

"Do you think he will answer your purpose?" I asked.

"I can remain exceedingly still if the Signor wishes," put in Toni. "Signor Pepe says he is a painter; what does he wish to see? A sailor hoisting the sails [Toni suddenly threw his body back with arms extended and uplifted to drag at an imaginary rope] or eating his maccheroni [he held an invisible basin in one hand and held up fictitious coils of maccheroni with the other, allowing the airy food to drop into the open mouth in his upturned face], or perhaps the Signor desires a beggar [his hat was held out and his whole attitude fawned for a *soldo*]. I can be what the most excellent Signor may wish me to be."

Although Toni had never yet posed in a studio he had encountered that ubiquitous person the English artist before, and had some idea of his requirements. His ready Italian grace and adaptiveness had done the rest.

Thomas Willoughby had watched the scene with some interest, and now he spoke in answer. "Have you a sweetheart?" he asked.

"A wife, if it please the Signor."

"Ah, a wife," Willoughby's face took a curious expression.

"And a *bambino*," went on Toni proudly, "an angel of a *bambino*, Signor, with brown eyes like mine." The beautiful eyes in question were fixed upon his interlocutor who seemed suddenly to come to some resolution.

"And what is the Signora's name, may I ask?"

"My wife's name is Nina; the *bambino* is Toni like myself," answered the man simply.

"I do not want to paint a sailor, nor a man eating his dinner, nor yet a beggar," said Thomas slowly, "but try and pay attention to me for a moment. Suppose someone wanted to take Nina away from you, and threatened to carry her off, and sup-

pose you came home and heard your wife cry out in terror and that you could get at the man who was frightening her,—how would you look then?"

He leaned eagerly forward watching the effect of his words express itself on the subtle changes of the Italian's face; as he concluded, Toni, with a look of genuine rage provoked by the other's dramatic situation, sprang suddenly forward with a magnificent sense of onslaught; we saw his right hand rise, then fall like lightning with a stiletto that flashed in the sunlight; and involuntarily we both recoiled. The next moment the master of the *Stella del Mare* recollected himself and, concealing the stiletto with a muttered word or two, stood before us looking rather ashamed of himself.

"That will do," said Thomas approvingly; "if you can occasionally assume that attitude it is all I want. You need only do it when I tell you. When can you come and pose to me?"

"To-morrow, if the Signor wishes," said Toni.

"Well, to-morrow then at this hour," said Willoughby; and Toni, well satisfied with the liberal terms offered, departed the richer for a handful of cigarettes and half a pint of good wine.

I left the *campagna* early next morning as was my custom, for now Willoughby was no longer an invalid, I carried on my usual occupations during the day and returned to keep my friend company in the late afternoon or evening. It was seven o'clock when I got back, and it appeared that Toni had fulfilled his engagement punctually and had proved an exceedingly docile and satisfactory sitter. His chatter too, had amused the artist, whose own perfect knowledge of Italian, together with his natural inclination to good-fellowship, had enabled him to establish himself

on excellent terms with the master of the onion-boat; and already this fresh interest had begun to bear fruit in the dissipation of the taciturnity which had lately oppressed Willoughby. On the fourth day of the sitting I returned earlier than usual, and found the work still in progress.

"It is going on very well indeed," I said inspecting the picture which, perhaps owing to genuine enthusiasm, was certainly a decided advance upon any of his previous performances. "You have caught a splendid attitude for Perseus."

"Yes, I think he is pretty good," said Thomas modestly, looking at his handiwork with his head on one side.

"Will the Signor permit me also to see the picture?" asked Toni, whose natural sense of awkwardness in his unaccustomed surroundings, together with his shyness of Willoughby, was beginning to wear off. He had not hitherto had the hardihood to inspect the painting as one more accustomed to sitting might have done, with or without leave, and for some reason it had not occurred to Thomas to invite an opinion.

"Certainly," said the latter; "come and look at yourself, Toni."

Thus encouraged Perseus advanced and, taking up a post of observation behind the artist's stool, began to criticise. "Truly it is marvellous what may be done with a paint-brush and the coloured messes in those little pipes. Here am I, arms and legs, and shoulders and hands all complete, and made out of nothing but a spoonful of coloured paste, and a brush, and the Signor's skill. It is wonderful indeed! But I see that I have no face! Surely the Signor will vouchsafe me eyes and nose and mouth? Ah, and the Signorina there so uncomfortably placed against that rock,—why!—" he broke off abruptly, evidently much struck with Andromeda.

"A beautiful creature, is she not, Toni?" said Willoughby.

"Beautiful indeed!" answered the man, still staring at the hapless maiden whom he had been too much absorbed in his own portrait to notice previously. "But surely,—" he broke off again.

"Can you suggest any means by which I may make her more lovely?" enquired Thomas, well pleased by the other's genuine admiration.

"Surely that is Signorina Iridé," said Toni at last in a mystified voice.

Thomas Willoughby, still a little weak from his illness, turned white as a sheet with excitement and surprise, and let all his brushes fall with a clatter; and I felt my own heart give a great leap as I responded to the mute appeal on his face, by at once assuming command of the situation. "Ah," I said, "so you know Signorina Iridé too, Toni; can you tell me where she lives?"

"At Ancona of course," answered the man, "in the big old house outside the town; the garden wall comes down close to the beach where my house is. I often see the Signorina looking over."

"And what is the other name of Signorina Iridé?" I asked. Toni looked puzzled and scratched his head. "I mean what is her father's name?" I said to prompt him.

"I really cannot at this moment remember, Signor Pepe; but when I return I will ask Nina, who being on the spot can tell me at once, and next time I bring the Stella del Mare to Soloporto I will come and tell you."

"I will give you an envelope with my address, Toni," I said, "also the money for the stamp and to pay the scribe, if directly you get to Ancona you will send me word what is the

surname of Signorina Iridé; I do not want to wait till you return."

"Certainly if you wish it, Signor Pepe," answered Capello, evidently a little astonished.

"Is she now in Ancona?" I enquired.

"No," said Toni; "during the summer weather she is always absent travelling with her aunt with whom she lives. About the month of October she will return, I suppose, as usual."

I had put my last question advisedly, being quite certain that Thomas, who was by no means yet fit for a hurried journey, was meditating a departure for Ancona by the next train. I saw his face fall visibly at the man's answer. "Well, Toni," I said, "to-day, I suppose, is your last sitting,—is it not?—since you must return to Ancona to-morrow. Do not forget to write; and here is an envelope," I added, rapidly preparing one with Thomas's writing-materials close at hand.

"My respects, Signor," said Toni with a graceful salutation to Willoughby, who like a man in a dream had taken out his purse and drawn therefrom the sum (a liberal one) agreed upon as the price of the sittings. He counted it into Toni's hand, and then held up a golden Italian *lire*. "This you will give to your wife for the *bambino*," he said, evading some of Capello's gratitude by going into the next room while I accompanied the overjoyed parent downstairs, and said good-bye to him with renewed charges not to forget the letter, which I will do him the justice to say was highly improbable. Then I went back to Thomas, pondering many things, for I knew that he had flung a thank-offering to Fate though the gold might be clasped in a baby's hand.

(To be continued.)

BURNS.¹

To be a National Bard is the worst of disasters; for, despite the indiscreet flattery which is heaped upon him, the National Bard is foredoomed to misappreciation and caricature. Above all things, he is made the packhorse of the National Sentiment, until his blameless verses are laden with the follies of all his compatriots; and the National Sentiment, like John Bull, Jacques Bonhomme, and the other symbolic perversions of the comic Press, can only represent the coarser and more obvious traits of a people. If we were sufficiently familiar with the life of the ancient Greeks, it would doubtless be easy to prove that Homer's lines were twisted to many a vile purpose; Euripides, we know, was quoted as a false witness against himself in his own lifetime. Even Shakespeare has not escaped disgrace. Wherever the English tongue is spoken, he endures garbled quotation and shameless parody. Moreover he has even crossed the Channel, and there are few French journalists who do not conclude their daily article with the unnecessary tag, *That is the question*. Then, too, he must bear the brunt of popular representation upon the stage, and the playgoer is apt to warp his understanding of HAMLET or OTHELLO by the remembered tones and gestures of some mouthing actor. But the sufferings of Shakespeare are as nothing compared to the sufferings of Burns. For not only is Burns the poet of a nation or of a parish, he is the poet of a nation in whose life sentiment is the very first necessity; and

by an unhappy accident, the populace of Scotland has chosen the poetry of Burns to express all its tangled emotions. No contradiction seems too grim; no inconsistency baffles the people's ardour. If Scotland shiver with Puritanism, then Burns must minister to the chill disease and appear in the guise of blameless lover and sturdy pillar of the Kirk. Again, when Scotland would carouse, Burns must play another part, and he is bidden to masquerade as the genius of debauchery. His countrymen shout forth his songs from the hazardous summits of chairs and tables; they make wild endeavours to grasp the hand of friendship to the skirling of pipes and the spilling of whiskey. In Glasgow or in Timbuctoo, in Peebles or in Johannesburg Scottish patriotism finds its loudest expression in Burns, until the author of HOLY WILLIE is pictured as a kind of Kirk Elder, and THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT is an instant excuse for glasses round.

It follows that Burns has been constantly admired and deplored upon false grounds. One of his more recent biographers went so far as to shed a tear of regret over THE JOLLY BEGGARS, a masterpiece which will outlive by many a century the memory of Highland Mary. Others have paid a debt of superfluous admiration to his poorest experiments in the English tongue and in trite morality. But his champions have concerned themselves too little with the incomparable poet, the biting satirist, the idle singer of idle songs. There was at the outset every opportunity for misunderstanding: even the dialect of Burns was enough to contract his fame; and the

¹ THE POETRY OF ROBERT BURNS; edited by W. E. Henley and T. F. Henderson. In four volumes; Edinburgh, 1896-7.

injustice wreaked by indiscreet admiration was intensified a hundredfold by the extravagant folly of Burns Clubs, which have been as eager to bring ridicule upon their author as our own Browning Society.]

[It is therefore greatly to the credit of Messrs. Henley and Henderson, whose Centenary Edition is much too important a book to be dismissed in a hasty review a month after publication, that they have disengaged Burns from the national sentiment. Thus, among other good offices, they have enabled us at last to contemplate him in a simpler guise than that of the soiled angel or the melodious devil. To accomplish this necessary duty they have first of all assured themselves a perfect text. For the proper understanding of a poet it is essential to know precisely what he wrote, and no poet was ever so careless of his masterpieces as Robert Burns.] The greater part of his work was left unpublished at his death, and he was so prodigal of his gifts that he would post a poem to a friend and forget its existence. Yet he was never a careless writer, to whom a various reading was a matter of hazard. On the contrary, though he wrote with ease, he corrected, like all writers conscious of their art, with extreme difficulty, and castigated the least of his works to the last polish of refinement. But for him the joy of poetry began in production and ended in the perfect work. Despite his character and surroundings he was singularly free from the author's vanity. Publication meant little indeed for him, and he readily forgot such of his creations as were abroad in the world. *THE JOLLY BEGGARS*, for instance,—“that pleasant and splendid production” Matthew Arnold calls it—survives only by a series of accidents. The early editions excluded it, and it

won its first place in the author's works to the championship of Sir Walter Scott. But it existed in manuscript, or rather in several manuscripts, and by a strange fatality the best version passed from Scotland to the Azores, and from the Azores to Nova Scotia. The fortune of *THE JOLLY BEGGARS* is typical, and from the very first the poems of Burns were subject to corruption. What the uncertainty of the original began, the carelessness of editors completed. In brief, we have read Burns at hazard, and have even accepted the corrections of a foolish puritanism for the gospel of truth. But henceforth there will be no excuse for a faulty text. [Messrs. Henley and Henderson have treated Burns as the famous editors of Germany have treated the classics. They have slurred nothing; they have conjectured nothing; they have not presumed to improve their author, as a hundred busybodies have improved Horace or Æschylus, and as Dr. Bentley would have improved Milton. But they have collated every poem not with one manuscript only, but with every manuscript that was authentic and available; and if a personal preference has been allowed to assert itself in the choice of a variant, all the variants are given in the notes, so that the reader has all the material necessary for the complete consideration of Burns's work.]

[The text once settled, the editors have set themselves to observe the pedigree of the poems, and while the ancient theory that Burns was a ploughman whistling at his furrow has been exploded, it has been exploded in the cause of truth and common sense.] Mr. Stevenson long since pointed out that Burns wrote best in emulation, that his inspiration always lagged without a model. In the common use of the word he was

original neither in his motives nor in his rhythms, yet so nobly was he endowed with the truer originality that by his own excellence he made the less worthy experiments of his forbears his own. Burns, says Mr. Henley, "is *ultimus Scotorum*, the last expression of the old Scots' world." [In a word, he concentrated in his own genius the achievements of the past. He represented in the highest form the poetry of Scotland, as it had been sketched by Dunbar and Montgomery, by Ramsay and Fergusson.] Nothing was too low for a suggestion, nor too high for rivalry. He expressed in perfect verse the vague experiments of the chap-books and the ballads. To say that he was a plagiarist is to misunderstand his method. He did but seize what may be called the folk-lore of poetry, and convert it to nobler uses. The tunes, maybe, were old, but he played them upon his own richer, ampler lyre, until their origin was obscured by a fresh beauty. [No poet ever had so strange a history; a lyrist of genius, he was born into the least lyrical of worlds. Had he been an Englishman following the habit of the time he would have written Pindaric odes, and jingled the outworn couplets. Indeed, he did both, and the world has forgotten his couplets and his odes. But he did more also; he rescued half-a-dozen measures from undeserved obscurity. He forgot Shenstone in Dunbar, and Gray in Fergusson. Above all, the ancient broadsheet was more to his mind than the polished commonplace of the eighteenth century; and he owes his greatness not to a marvellous gift of originality, but to the free, unfettered genius which bade him cast off the weight of a foolish authority and seek his models where best he could appreciate them, in the barrow of the street-hawker and in

the forgotten lore of lyrical Scotland.]

[But if Burns was familiar with the literature of the streets, he was none the less a man of letters. His education, though narrow, was sound, and his father bequeathed to him a sincere love and a proper understanding of books. He wrote a prose which would shame no man, and while his poetic imagination would not permit a cool estimate of himself, the snatches of biography which may be gathered from his letters are picturesque and even passionate.] In English verse he was never at his ease,—so much he confesses himself. "These English songs gravel me to death," he wrote with perfect truth to Thomson; "I have not that command of the language which I have of my native tongue. In fact, I think my ideas are more barren in English than in Scottish." The Duchess of Gordon was of the same opinion, and regretted that a poem addressed to her was not written in the poet's vernacular. [But when Burns handled his own tongue, he was as fine an artist in words as Horace himself. Though with a proud humility, which Horace too would have understood, he speaks of his "rustic song," rusticity was a vice which he never knew. The accident that he wrote a language spoken by the peasants of Mossgeil and Mauchline did not affect the artful perfection of his verse.] In the preface to his first edition he takes, with other poets, a lowly view of his performance. He confesses that he has not "the advantages of learned art," and that he "does not look down for a rural theme with an eye to Theocritus or Virgil"; his purpose, says he, is "to amuse himself with the little creations of his own fancy"; but these confessions need not be taken too seriously. The oaten reed and the scrannel pipe are the professed heritage of all; and

Burns's preface meant no more than the admissions of Herrick, of Milton, or of Pope. [In his heart he knew himself a great artist, nor to his friends does he conceal his exultation.] But he is a great artist who, happily or unhappily, has become popular, and in the devotion of the crowd his excellencies have been slurred, while his ostensible vices have appeared virtues to the over-sympathetic.]

Yet the unbiassed critic has no difficulty in separating the wheat from the chaff. [THE JOLLY BEGGARS, long held unworthy the author of THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT, is an immortal masterpiece of melody and observation. The squalor of the piece is glorified by a style so little rustic that every word and every rhythm is fitted to its purpose. It is the literature of the street, maybe, but the literature of the street made classic for all time; and on either side of it may stand that miracle of quiet irony, THE TWA DOGS, and the grim fantasy from fairyland which is known as TAM O' SHANTER. These are works of invention which might establish a poet's claim to immortality, yet they are but a corner of Burns's achievement.] In HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER, and the other poisoned shafts launched at the Kirk, he proves himself a master of satire,—of satire that could wound and render its victim's recovery hopeless.] The rarest gift remains untold,—the gift of song which, rather than the composition of epics or the building of plays, justifies the ancient proverb *poeta nascitur*. It is a gift that can neither be fostered nor controlled, and a lyrical voice is as seldom heard as a nightingale in Cheapside. Some years since the French Academy, which has never lacked courage, undertook to award a triennial prize to the worthiest song of the moment. But with all their courage they have never had a chance to make the

award, and in sheer despair they are renouncing the responsibility. Yet the voice, once heard, is unmistakable, and Burns is one of the few singers the world has known. That he regarded this one gift with seriousness is certain.] So lofty was his lyric pride that he declined to accept money for his masterpieces, not, as Mr. Stevenson suggests because "his steps led downwards," but because he believed, with a touch of sentiment, that the writing of songs was above price. [As we have said, he laid his hand upon whatever material he found suitable, but he himself was the first to declare his indebtedness, and the genius which transformed the hasty sketch into a marvel of music was all his own.]

In undertaking, therefore, to discover the origins of Burns Messrs. Henley and Henderson have but completed the task indicated by himself, and they have performed it with rare knowledge and industry. They have ransacked the ballad literature of two centuries and omitted nothing that might elucidate the poet's text.] The Pepys collection at Cambridge, the famous broadsides of Lords Crawford and Rosebery, and a perfect wilderness of Black Letters have been consulted and compared, until all the songs in Johnson's MUSEUM and THE SCOTTISH AIRS are traced to their sources. There may be a suspicion of pedantry in placing Burns under a debt to ballads which he probably never saw in his life; but, though he knew not the remoter past to which he was bound, at least he had grasped the later links in the chain of tradition. Nor may the poet be lawfully suspected of plagiarism. In Mr. Henley's phrase, "he did but pass the folk-song of his nation through the mint of his mind, and reproduced it stamped with his image and lettered with his superscription." That is the editors' point of

view, and if a thousand singers went to his making, his own claim to be the greatest poet of Scotland is not one whit impoverished. Rather is the greatest of all distinctions conferred upon his ancestors.

Burns, in fact, scarce put his hand to a metre that had not come to him rough and ready-made from the past, and the note on *THE ADDRESS TO THE DEIL* is a perfect specimen of the editors' method. The six-line stave, in *rime couée* built on two rhymes, is a favourite with Burns, and though of course he knew nothing of its history, its lineage is unbroken in spite of his ignorance. He took it from Fergusson, who wrote his best work in it, and Fergusson borrowed it from Ramsay, who picked it up from the broadsides. From Ramsay you go straight back into the past. Though King James knew it not, it was admirably handled both by Sir Richard Maitland and Alexander Scott. Thus it is that Scott complains against Cupid :

Quhome sould I wyt of my mischance
Bot Cuped, King of variance ?
Thy court, without considerance,
Quhen I it knew.
Or evir made the observance,
Sa far I rew.

And so through Montgomerie's *REGRATE OF HIS UNHAPPY LUVES* we arrive at the Towneley Mysteries, and the low Latin of the twelfth century. Here is Hilary, a monk of Paris, writing the same measure, that in the eighteenth century Burns found in a remote parish of Scotland :

Danielem nos vidimus
Pronum suis numinibus.
Esa detur leonibus
Quia sprevit
Quod Babilonis Darius
Rex decrevit.

Thence to Count William of Poitiers (1071-1127) is but a step ; and thus it

is that Robert Burns derives through a long line of ancestry from the troubadours.

So, too, *THE JOLLY BEGGARS* had its origin in a past which the poet ignored, an origin the more interesting because Burns had studied his characters from the life. "I have often courted the acquaintance," says he, "of that part of mankind commonly known by the ordinary phrase of 'blackguards,' sometimes further than was consistent with the safety of my character." Even had his character suffered you would have forgiven the lapse for the sake of a masterpiece ; but so firmly does Burns realise the personages of his little drama that you feel sure his character had not suffered in this quest at least. Yet although he wrote with his eye upon life, he wrote also with his eye upon literature, and this immortal cantata was many a generation in the making. For the praise of beggars is sung in every chap-book that was read to tatters from the sixteenth century to the eighteenth. Even the title of the cantata is ascribed to James the Fifth :

There was a jolly beggar and a begging
he was boun',
And he took up his quarters into a
land'art town,—

while in England Copland's *HIGHWAY TO THE SPITAL HOUSE* (1536) was but a prelude to that notorious handbook of blackguardism, Harman's *CAVEAT, OR WARNING FOR COMMON CURSETORS*, which was read by Shakespeare and was a powerful influence upon his contemporaries. Thence the rascal travelled easily into the chap-books, and the sheet-literature of the eighteenth century is full of him. And there it is that Burns found him, borrowing a rhyme here and a touch of character there, but not detracting by this debt one whit from the splendour of his original piece. Thus it is

historical criticism does its work, and Messrs. Henley and Henderson have left small gleanings for those that follow after.

As the editors have treated the poems of Burns, so have they treated the poet and his world. They have pictured him in his hard, grey, drunken, unsympathetic surroundings, and the picture loses nothing by sincerity of treatment. Again and again the attempt has been made to gloss over the poet's sins and to belittle his shortcomings, but Mr. Henley has been insistent (occasionally a little too insistent, some may think,) in his expression of the truth, and his biography paints the portrait, without favour or disguise, of the real Burns, the enemy of the Kirk, the too liberal lover, the man with the artistic temperament and all its failings. The indiscretion of earlier critics has met with its inevitable reaction, and perhaps the reaction carries us too far the other way. Mr. Henley does not disguise his antipathy to his predecessors, and at times expresses his displeasure with a fortitude which the occasion scarcely merits. It is also true that the poet's life does not particularly concern us, but others have made a false report, and it is in justice to Burns that at last the truth is told. Some virtuous biographer, in the vain attempt to erect unto himself another graven image, long since invented a Burns of plaster or terracotta. It was an admirable ornament for the chimney-piece, and an admirable toast at a public dinner; but it was inhuman, and as far as the Sunday School from the real man of genius who wrote *TAM O'SHANTER* and *HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER*. Moreover, that his victim might not be disconsolate in the coldness of plaster, the pious biographer invented a mystic companion whom he called Highland Mary. Of this other plaster-cast

nothing is known in the flesh, save that she received a Bible and died; yet she has appeared to several generations a twin-soul to the ploughman-poet. Doubtless to the ploughman-poet she would have been a twin soul. But Burns was never a ploughman-poet, and Highland Mary seems never to have been an influence in his life. It is, indeed, a strange commentary upon the study of literature that the rustic loves of Burns should still be discussed with the same ardour where-with the memory of Shelley and Harriet and Mary Wolstonecraft is obscured. Not even George Sand and Musset have been tracked down and spied upon posthumously with a keener energy than Burns and Mary Campbell and Jean Armour and the fair Clarinda. The labour of indiscretion has been in vain, of course, and the only result has been to confuse the plain reading of the poet. But, given the false and popular conception of Burns, the invention of Mary Campbell was inevitable, and Mr. Henley is only clearing away the fogs of criticism when he attempts to place the characters of the drama in a right relation. Clarinda, doubtless, was a passing phantasy to Burns, as was Annie to Poe; Mary Campbell is three-parts mythical; Jean Armour is the one woman who had an enduring hold and influence upon the poet's life. Had a foolish piety not intervened, there would have been little enough to say; but it had intervened, and it is well that once and for always the poet's character should be explained and justified.

That Burns should have been happy was impossible from the first. Men who are born to confer happiness upon countless generations are too often condemned to bite the wormwood themselves. "God have mercy upon me," he wrote of himself, "a poor damned, incautious, duped, unfortunate fool!"

The sport, the miserable victim of rebellious pride, hypochondriac imaginations, agonising sensibility, and bedlam passions." There was a true cry from the heart of the "misplaced Titan"! To be born out of one's station is a tragedy indeed. The hapless runagate, well-born and wealthy, who descends upon the companionship of stable-boys and sharpers is familiar enough, and because his misfortune is obvious, it is deplored by a thousand moralists. [But the man of genius, born in a lowly condition, and forced by his wit and brilliancy to share the life of men and women more cultured and wealthy than himself, suffers a fate ten times more bitter and inevitably misunderstood.] Doubtless the aristocracy of Edinburgh, in opening its doors to Burns, believed that it was conferring upon him the last condescension. It was but acting the part of the sharper towards the gilded youth, and forcing him, as in his detestable attack on Mrs. Riddell, into an entirely false position. [Burns was born to the plough, with the rough habits and passions of the peasant; his intellect, on the other hand, purified him of all grossness, and made him the fit companion for the most accomplished and refined society of his day. Torn hither and thither, he fell in the struggle, as hundreds have fallen above and below him, but his misfortune is by no means lessened because he was dragged for a season through the drawing-rooms of Edinburgh.] He was a man to whom condescension was impossible. Nobody met him without admitting his marvellous wit and brilliant temperament. Scott, who had known all the great ones of his generation, treasured the memory of Burns's magnificent eye; the Duchess of Gordon, with characteristic frankness, confessed that his conversation carried her instantly "off her legs." His manners, if awk-

ward, were the manners of a gentleman, and once his voice was raised the whole table was silent. Such men as Robertson or Dugald Stewart were his humble admirers, and it is not remarkable that he knew his power as intimately as those who felt it. So it was that he became a leader in a world that was not his own, and which never could have been his own. The hard training of an Ayrshire farm had possessed him with a devil which could not be exorcised in polished Edinburgh. He felt inevitably into the company of wits and drunkards, still the leader in converse, still unrivalled in repartee. Among professors, as among ploughmen, he was supreme, but his very supremacy was his undoing. Having conquered Dugald Stewart, and having brought the chaste Clarinda to his feet, he returned to his parish, and his Kirk-elders, and all the petty tyranny of the countryside. But, despite the sympathy of Jean Armour, he was unsatisfied. The mind was too large for the body, the bird for the cage. He led the only life that was possible to him, and it could not possibly bring him content or happiness. The travels of a gauger kept him from composition; the lapse of composition drove him to despair. There was nothing to fulfil his manifold energy, save the raffish conviviality of the countryside, and the society of taverns drove him to Jacobinism and despair. Moreover, he was first and last a man of letters. He was not, save by the hazard of birth, either a ploughman or a gauger. He was no peasant in grain, warbling his "native woodnotes wild." His woodnotes, if native, were never for an instant wild. He wrote the vernacular because it was his own tongue: he wrote English because it was the fashion; and he failed in his imitations of Shenstone and the rest, because English was to him a foreign

tongue which he handled with the uncertainty of a scholar expressing himself in Ovidian Latin or Thucydidean Greek. So in his odes and couplets he is always dependent upon borrowed phrases and unfelt conceits. But directly he touched the vernacular, his own speech, he wrote it like an artist to whom literature was the first necessity of life. Thus being a man of temperament, he delighted in the art of masquerade; he was always present to himself as a creation. He magnified his misfortunes, and he idealised his love-affairs, until, like many another artist, he lived through superfluous tragedies and suffered a thousand imagined tortures. But none the less he did his work and lived his life, despite the habit of literary extravagance, and despite the consciousness that he was discharging the duties of another man. Carlyle would have sent him to a university, and so replaced his exquisite mastery of the vernacular by a foolish aspiration after English. But at least he escaped this mishap, and won himself a place among the few great poets

of the world. "The Man," in Mr. Henley's phrase, "had drunk his life to the lees, while the Poet had fulfilled himself to the accomplishing of a peculiar immortality, so that to Burns death came as a deliverer and a friend." And for us it is not to give false reading to his virtues, or unduly to deplore his mishaps. It is for us to remember that he wrote a dozen of the best songs the world has heard, that he is the author of *TAM O'SHANTER* and *THE JOLLY BEGGARS*, that he brought humour and gaiety and freedom back to an age that had forgotten them in the foolish manufacture of odes and fantasies. His own carelessness, and the misapprehension of others, claimed for him a careful editing, and for the future he will best be read in these four volumes of Messrs. Henley and Henderson. For his latest editors have shown the wisest loyalty in their regard for truth, while in scholarship and justice they have outstripped all their predecessors.

CHARLES WHIBLEY.

IN THE LAND OF THE WHITE POPPY.

THOSE parts of India, known as Oudh, the North-West Provinces, and Behar, constitute what may be called the Land of the White Poppy. These provinces are watered by many rivers, the principal of which are the Goomti, the Gogra, the Sone, and, last and greatest of all, the Ganges. Broadly speaking, it is the Gangetic valley that is the domain of the white poppy. There are numerous other rivers, such as the Kali Nuddi, a treacherous stream given to overflowing its muddy banks with disastrous results, and the Ramganga, a tributary of the Ganges. Of this river the natives have a saying—

Gangaji ki katta reth
Ramganga ki katta keth—

which means, when the Ganges overflows its banks it turns the fields to sand, but the waters of the Ramganga improve the quality of the land.

In all this region only the white-flowered variety of the poppy is grown. Away, south of the Jumna in the plains of Malwa, the red poppy brightens the fields around Rajput homesteads. In Behar, in Oudh, and in the North-West Provinces it is a strange fact that the red-flowered variety of this plant does not produce opium of any economic value. There is for this reason a strong feeling against it in the Gangetic valley, and should even one coloured flower appear in the white spread of the fields, no time is lost in destroying it.

Although the cultivation of the poppy is extremely profitable, and hence popular among all castes, it is not followed with equal success by all of them. The Brahmin, the Thakur,

the Rai, and the Mussulman are considered to be the least able to make the crop pay. This is due to the fact that, as a rule, they will not work in the fields themselves, preferring to leave the task to hired labourers who are naturally careless of their employers' interests. The inevitable result of this system is a large expenditure and diminished profit. The Koeri and the humble Kachhi, or Murao, are the hereditary high priests of the poppy cult. The Koeri is by caste and the tradition of centuries a farmer, and the Kachhi has ever been what he is now, a market-gardener. Both are true children of the soil. Their practical training begins with their infancy: their first ideas are associated with the brown earth of the fields; and though ignorant of all other learning, they are masters in their own line and tend their crops as if they loved them. The secret of their success is hard work, and they reap the reward of their labour a hundred fold, for they bring in great earthen pots full of opium to the weighing centres every year, and return to their villages rejoicing, with many bright rupees tied up in their waistcloths.

It is the month of Asar (July); there is a bank of heavy clouds in the north-east; a strong wind is blowing and a grey light fills the air. It is clear that rain is coming, and the Koeri loses no time. Hastily taking up the light plough resting against the thatched roof of his hut, he calls to his wife or son to assist him, and driving the two rough-coated starveling bullocks that form his team before him, proceeds to plough up the field

he has reserved for poppy. This field has been lying fallow since March, and will now be ploughed, weather permitting, once every eight days until October. In October the Koeri makes arrangements with the *gararea*, or village shepherd, to picket his sheep in the field at night. He thus secures a dressing of manure, and every time this is done he pays about sixpence to the shepherd.

This simple process of manuring is followed by ploughing in all directions until November. The field is then attacked with the *hingah*, or clod-breaker. This instrument is nothing more than a heavy bar of wood, which is yoked to the cattle by rope traces in place of the plough. It lies horizontally on the surface of the field and at right angles to the bullocks; to increase its weight a couple of boys or a man often sit upon it. The trituration by this rude though powerful implement is followed by further ploughing, and this again by clod-crushing. The soil of the field thus becomes finely powdered and thoroughly amalgamated with the manure, and is now almost in a fit state to receive the seed. Before sowings commence, however, the field is once more harried with the plough, and then the seed is scattered broadcast.

Early the next morning the Koeri is out again. He stands near his well: his patient bullocks are with him, but the plough and the *hingah* have been left at home; and instead of these a coil of stout rope lies over the farmer's brown shoulder, and an assistant, who is often the Koeri's wife, carries a large leather bag, the mouth of which is kept open by an iron ring. One end of the rope is fastened to the mouth of the bag by means of cross pieces of wood or iron, in such a manner as to enable the *mot*, for so the bag is called, to be lowered perpendicularly into the well;

the other end of the rope is passed over a winch fixed over the mouth of the well, and fastened to the yoke.

At the brink of the well-mouth stands the Koeri's wife with one hand on the rope. It is her duty to guide the *mot* on its journey up and down, and, when it comes to light again brimming over with warm well-water, she brings it to land with a deft twist of her arm, and the rope being slackened the water pours into a channel made for the purpose and is conveyed to the field. The Koeri himself manages the team. He accompanies his cattle down the steep slope and thence up again to the well-top, whence he looks to see that the women and boys are working in the field. He shouts now to them, now to his cattle; and so the day wanes, and the last square inch of thirsty soil has soaked up its share of water.

The field is now left until the soil is dry enough to admit of another ploughing. This is followed by a vigorous course of the *hingah*, and then again the field is left for four days. After the lapse of this time the surface of the field is made up into small rectangular beds, called *kia'id*, separated from each other by ridges of earth. The object of this is to facilitate the watering of the crop after the plant has germinated. Until germination takes place, which should be in about a week or ten days after the beds have been made, the field requires no further attention. The Koeri and his household now turn their thoughts to other crops in which they are interested, for they never sit idle and are too wise not to have more than one iron in the fire.

Should the seed not germinate, or the seedlings be destroyed by unusual heat, the indefatigable Koeri will make second and third sowings if necessary. The growth of the young

plant upon which so much labour and time has been spent is watched with anxious care, and when the tender seedling, throwing asunder the close embrace of its cotyledons, expands its first true foliage-leaves to the light and air, the important news is repeated to each other by the farmers with eyes glistening with joy and hope.

As the plant grows it is carefully weeded and watered from time to time, and the soil about its roots loosened with a small iron hoe, called a *khurpi*. The winter rains are looked for with anxiety, and should these fail the well and the *mot* are again in requisition. Surface-dressings of manure are applied at intervals; that most esteemed being a saline deposit found chiefly on the walls of old mud huts, and called *nona-matti* (salt earth). By the month of January the plant is some twelve inches high: in February a rapid increase takes place in the size of the plant; and towards the end of this month the fields are one mass of dazzling white bloom.

The variety of poppy grown here is that known to science as *papaver somniferum*. It is a plant of vigorous growth, and the beauty of its long bright green leaves is enhanced by the deep serrations of their margins. The leaves do not spring from stalks, but embrace the stem which appears to rise through their bases, and this serves to increase the elegance of the general appearance of the plant. The flower is solitary and borne at the end of a long stalk. As a bud it droops towards the ground, the neck of the stalk being bent like the end of a shepherd's crook. The bud is enclosed in two pale green calyx leaves, which, as the petals expand, are gently torn from their bases and generally drop off before the flower is fully open. There are only four petals, broadening

from the base, of a delicate texture, finely crimped, and of a brilliant white colour. Inside this alabaster cup nestles the green ovary surmounted by a crown of stigmata and buried in innumerable fawn-coloured anthers. The flower lives but a short life. In forty-eight hours after the white petals have trembled open to the sun and breeze they flutter down to the earth. The sun brings maturity to the ovary that is soon deserted by the withering stamens; and it is left to swell and grow until the experienced eye of the Koeri tells him that its outer walls are full of the milky juice that is known later on as opium.

When the Koeri has made sure that the ovary, or capsule as it is called, is ripe, which is generally about the first week in March, he begins the delicate operation of lancing. In this he is aided by his family, and if his fields are numerous, he will call in the families of his friends to help him. The process of lancing is begun in the afternoon, and requires much care and experience. The operator stands somewhat behind the capsule and, grasping it in the left hand, makes an incision from base to apex with a four-bladed lance of peculiar shape, called a *neshtar*. Great care has to be taken that the incision does not go deeper than the outer envelopes of the walls of the capsule, as it is only in those that the laticiferous vessels lie. A deeper incision would injure the capsule and cause it to dry up prematurely. In skilful hands a vigorous capsule will take as many as eight incisions.

The moment the lancet is withdrawn the juice, which is on its first appearance of a pure white colour, exudes and slowly trickles down the side of the capsule, thickening as it comes into contact with the air and forming a tear at the base of the incision.

The action of the air also causes an immediate change in the colour of the juice, which assumes a reddish hue, and finally takes the dark brown tint natural to the opium of commerce.

The capsules, after being lanced, are left until the next morning, when the drug that has exuded is collected by means of a shallow scoop, called a *sitwa*. Shells are often used for this purpose also, and sometimes even the edge of a *khurpi*. The crude opium as collected is stored in a brass vessel, and then taken home to be properly inspissated. It is finally conveyed in earthen platters and pots to the weighing-centres, where it is made over to the officers appointed by Government to receive it.

It has been said that the life of the poppy flower is a short one, and that the petals soon fall to the ground. In many parts of the regions where the poppy is cultivated, however, the petals are gently detached from their bases before they fall, and are then placed in masses in the shallow iron frying-pans, called *tawa* by the natives. They are then subjected to the action of a gentle heat, and are at the same time pressed with a damp rag. The heat causes the natural glutinous juices of the petals to exude, and the whole mass finally coheres and forms a thin cake, very much like a pancake. A well-made cake of petals is of a pale golden colour and smooth texture, and is strong and pliant. A leaf of this sort is called a *chandi*, or silver leaf, by the cultivators. These leaves are required for the manufacture of the shells of the opium-cakes at the opium-factory, and the cultivators are well paid for them.

The capsules, after the lancing is over, are left to dry on the stalk, and are then plucked off and broken open for the seed. When the lancing has been properly done the seed-producing qualities of the capsule are not affected

in any way. The seed contained in the finer and more vigorous capsules is stored up by the cultivator for his next year's crop, and the balance is sold to the *teli*, or oilman, to be pressed for poppy oil. The seeds are also used as a seasoning for many of the dishes that delight the Mussulman's palate, and are known by him as *kash-kash*. Even for the broken capsules some use is found; they are sold to the *pansari*, or druggist, an infusion of them in boiling water making an excellent fomentation for sprains or painful swellings.

There now remain the stalks and leaves of the plants, and these also are turned to a profitable use. The leaves are allowed to wither on the stalks, and are then swept up and collected in huge bales.

In the process of collecting and packing, the dry leaves are reduced to a coarse powder, and this substance is technically known as *trash*. It forms a most useful article for packing and is much used in the central opium-factories. The stalks are then collected for fuel, so that it may safely be said that no part of the plant is wasted.

The cultivation of the poppy is not unattended by risks, for the plant has many enemies and is liable to many accidents during its short life. As a young plant its existence is menaced by the *gadhyas*, a grey weevil that appears in large numbers during hot, dry weather. The cultivators, knowing the great partiality these insects have for any juicy vegetable substance, strew bits of pumpkin as bait in their fields. In the morning the *gadhyas* are found swarming on the bits of pumpkin and might easily be destroyed; but their captors, urged by religious scruples, frequently decline to kill them, and satisfy themselves with carrying these pests off to some distance, or depositing them in a neighbour's field. Several species of

caterpillars, the larvæ of certain not well-known species of moths, also infest the leaves of the plant at various stages of its existence; but they cease their ravages as soon as the plant attains maturity, for its juices are then apparently unpalatable to the insect tribes. Among animals, the *nilghai*, the largest of Indian antelopes, is as fond of the young poppy as the *gadhya*; and in wilder parts of the country his grey form may often be seen in the early morning, returning from the poppy fields to the dense cover of the grass jungle or the *dhak* thicket in the vicinity.

During the process of lancing the Koeri often casts anxious glances at the eastern sky, for rain at this time would cause a heavy loss by washing away the exudations that have collected on the capsule. He is in still greater dread of hail, which often accompanies rain at this period of the year and frequently destroys the crop entirely. All broad-leaved crops are naturally more liable to be damaged by hail than crops with very thin leaves; and consequently the poppy and tobacco fields are always the first to be ruined when a storm of this description occurs.

But of all the diseases to which the poppy plant is heir, the one most dreaded by the cultivator is the blight. Damp and cloudy weather is favourable to the appearance of this disease, but it is not always possible to trace its origin clearly. It spreads with alarming rapidity, and under it the plants wither up shrivelled and sapless. In really bad cases not much can be done to save them; but if the disease be taken in time a careful weeding out of badly affected plants, together with surface-dressings of manure and watering, often saves at least part of the crop from utter destruction. The cultivator is, however, a philosopher, who takes the

bad with the good cheerfully; and when he makes up his poppy total of kicks and halfpence more often than not finds he has a preponderance of the latter to think of.

There is hardly an industry in India that is not watched over by Government with a paternal care. The poppy forms no exception, and it has wisely been ruled that its cultivation and the sale of its products should be directly regulated by Government. In Upper India the Government of Bengal is entrusted with the management of this task, and for the purposes of administration the control of the cultivation is placed under two agencies, one at Patna in Behar, and the other at Ghazipur in the North-West Provinces. Each of these agencies is under the orders of a high officer of the Civil Service, the out-station work being performed by district officers.

The official life of the opium district officer is passed among the people of the soil. He is generally a master of the dialect spoken in his district and is expected to be a good horseman for, in common with other officers of Government, he spends most of his time in the saddle. Early in August when the sky is black with rain clouds he leaves his pleasant home in the Station and vanishes into the *dihat*, or country. Here he sees what has been done, and in September is back again to report on the probable crop. In November he is again out, and does not come back till the cry of the brain-fever bird heralds the hot weather. During this period he leads a healthy, if nomadic life. He traverses the whole of the district under his charge, pays particular attention to the construction of wells, and inquires into all matters relating to the interests of his cultivators,—playing the part of a friend and adviser to them rather than of an officer.

By the first week of April he is ready to receive the opium produced in his district. The crude juice collected in March has by this time undergone considerable changes. It has given off its superfluous moisture, has become much harder, and has assumed, if properly cared for, the dark mahogany colour so distinctive of good opium. It has been arranged finally in the earthen vessel in which it will perform its journey to the *kothi*, as the weighing-centre is called, and the cultivator now awaits the summons annually sent to him by the opium-officer to attend the place of weighment.

There is a great stir in the village as the time approaches for this ceremony. It is an annual journey looked forward to with keen anticipations of pleasure by the simple-hearted country people. Many and important are the commissions entrusted to the caravan by the wives of its members. These will necessitate a long and delightful day spent in wandering about the crowded evil-smelling streets of the *shahr*, or native city, and the final purchase of some yards of gaudy cloth or, perchance, some silver jewelry, some native sweets, and it may be a quaint mud toy for little Rambalak or Ganesh. The caravan generally travels on foot, each man carrying his own opium; but sometimes a cart is used for the transport.

The scene of the examination and classification of the opium is an interesting one. The officer stands in the verandah of his *kothi*, or may be under the shade of some lofty *nim*, or mango tree, in the enclosure. He is in his shirt-sleeves and his arms are bare to the elbows. Before him is a rough table, and in front of that, on the ground, sit the cultivators silent and expectant. They are arranged in long lines, each man with his opium before him, and each group of villagers belong to one license, separate from the other groups.

The men of a license are called up one by one, and as each man is called he brings his pot of opium with his own hands and places it on the table in front of the officer. The latter first carefully searches the mass with one hand for such adulterations as may be detected in this manner, and then withdraws a small specimen to which he will afterwards apply chemical tests for purity. He has at the same time by his trained touch been able to inform himself of the consistence or degree of solidity to which the sample before him has attained. He now proclaims this quality in a clear voice, and at the same time marks it on the surface of the pot, and causes it to be entered in the official record which is carefully kept.

As may be supposed the examination of each pot is watched with keen interest, not only by its owner, but also by all the other cultivators belonging to the license. The officer's decision is received by the owner of the opium with grunts of satisfaction or grumblings of discontent, but his verdict, though not final, is rarely wrong. When the opium reaches the great central factory it is again examined by a thoroughly trained body of experts under the immediate supervision of the opium-examiner, and there receives its final classification. The work of examination by hand being over, the officer is able to turn his attention to the application of the chemical tests aforesaid. When he has thus satisfied himself that the opium is absolutely free from adulteration he permits it to be conveyed to the weighing-room.

In this way, working from five in the morning to nine or ten, he is able to examine and classify some five or six hundred pots, and is then at liberty to attend to his other duties in connection with the weighing of the drug and payments to the cultivators.

The opium is weighed in the weighing-room, pot by pot, and is collected in large receiving-jars, each of which is set aside for a particular quality and is calculated to hold eighty-two pounds of opium. The process of weighing occupies the whole day, and is carried out under the supervision of European officers specially employed for the purpose. The opium is paid for at a graduated scale according to the officer's classification; and a further settlement is made with the cultivators when the final decision of the central factory is made known.

Thus day succeeds day, a stream of cultivators pouring in with their opium, while a rival stream returns to the villages, as a rule in high content and looking eagerly forward to the next year's harvest. The work while it lasts is very hard and inflicts a heavy strain on the officer, who is employed, on an average, some ten hours a day at a time when owing to the great heat the climate is exceptionally trying.

As soon as a hundred of the large receiving-jars have been filled up they are despatched to the great central factory. The opium travels by bullock-cart, boat, or rail, according to the situation of the weighing-centre and the means of locomotion available. It is of course always sent under the protection of a guard, but robberies are not unknown though they are rare.

The Ghazipur opium-factory is the busy heart of the Benares Opium-Agency. It is placed on the banks of the Ganges and is a difficult place to reach, for it is not as yet on any line of rail. The nearest railway station is across the river, and this is the terminus of a branch line of the East Indian railway system.

The visitor to Ghazipur is deposited at a dreary station on the main line, called Dildarnagar. Here he is in

the midst of what looks in the hot weather like a howling wilderness. He has often to wait some two or three hours at this wretched place before the asthmatic engine, that conveys the four or five rickety trucks used on the branch line, is ready to convey him to the tiny station of Tarighat on the right bank of the Ganges.

It is a relief when the train starts, for, slow as its pace is, the movement is a welcome change from the baking platform at Dildarnagar. At Tarighat the traveller is confronted by a half mile of sand, white, stifling, and dazzling in the hot sun of an afternoon in May. It has to be done, however, and it is with a parched throat and weary limbs that the explorer crawls at last up the landing-stage and casts himself on an armchair on the quarter-deck of the Rama, a tiny little ferry steamer that runs between Tarighat and Ghazipur. In the meantime he has not failed to notice long strings of carts laden with opium-jars, each securely packed in a basket, and all travelling from the little station he has quitted to the river-side. He has, while on his weary way to the steamer, often had his progress impeded by these carts, and has sometimes had to dodge the horns of an irritable bullock, for the tempers of even these patient creatures give way under the combined influence of overwork, blows, twisting of tails, and the clouds of sand that sweep with every gust of wind over this trying half-mile. The jars contained in these carts have been filled up at the district weighing places and pour into the opium-factory at the rate of about fifteen hundred a day. When it is remembered that each of these jars contain eighty-two pounds of opium, some idea of the vast number of capsules that have been lanced to produce even the daily contribution,

and of the magnitude of the industry we are investigating, may be arrived at. This influx of opium continues sometimes for six weeks, sometimes for two months, according as the season has been an average or a bumper one.

The river being crossed, the traveller is confronted by a steep ascent up which he makes his way as best he can. A crowded native city is before him, and the usual inhabitants of its landing-places, beggars of all sorts and sizes and of all descriptions of loathsomeness, forthwith attack him. His luggage, which has been pounced upon by a crowd of yelling coolies, has by this time been placed on top of a sort of box on wheels, known as a *palkighary*, and into this he tumbles, glad to escape from the filthy crowd through which he has hitherto been fighting his way. Two tiny ponies, more remarkable for bone than muscle, are attached to the conveyance by harness consisting of odd bits of leather fastened in many places with pieces of coarse twine in lieu of buckles, and often with lengths of rope for reins.

The *gharry* takes some time to start, the ponies finding it necessary to back a little distance before sufficient momentum has been gained to urge the vehicle on its career. In the meantime the driver yells, the beggars whine, and the coolies demand more *bakshish*, while the traveller, if he is wise, keeps his temper and lights a pipe. At last the ponies go off at a hand-gallop and keep this pace up to the end of the journey. The street is crowded but the driver does not seem to mind this in the least. His vehicle proceeds with a rumbling and clashing that act as an efficient alarum, and he generally succeeds in piloting his fare safely through what seems to be interminable miles of a narrow road.

After this long journey the traveller arrives covered with dust and shaken but safe at the gates of the opium-factory; and here we must leave him for the time, hoping at a later period to describe some of the processes going on in this busy place.

G. LEVETT-YEATS.

SOME FRIENDS OF BROWNING.

THAT Robert Browning should make friends with a musical family was only natural. No English poet since Milton has had a better knowledge of music or a more intense love for it. To some extent, no doubt, his love was an inheritance. His grandfather on the mother's side was the son of an accomplished musician; his mother's own tastes were musical, and we know how his father would take the little Robert in his arms and soothe him to sleep by singing snatches of Anacreon to that favourite old tune, *A Cottage in a Wood*. At any rate, Browning, even as a child, was very susceptible to music. One evening, we are told, his mother was playing alone in the twilight. Presently she heard a sound behind her, and, turning round, beheld a little white figure distinct against an oak book-case, and could just discern two large wistful eyes looking earnestly at her. The next moment the child was in her arms sobbing passionately at he knew not what, but, as his burst of emotion subsided, whispering repeatedly with shy urgency, "Play, play!" It is said, too, that when the young poet began to find the artistic impulse stirring within him, he remembered his mother's music and aspired to be a musician. And even when he had come to see that "Verse alone one life allows me," it was rather as a musician and an artist that he was known among his associates. Nor was this surprising. The late Sir Charles Hallé, who was one of his intimates, declares in his reminiscences that Browning "knew the whole literature of music, had an un-failing judgment, and sometimes drew my attention to pieces by older masters

which had escaped my notice." Hallé says he must have been a good pianist himself, though he could never be prevailed upon to give a proof of his powers. No doubt he would shrink from exhibiting himself before an artist of such standing as Hallé. In other circumstances he was less reticent, as for example when he sat down at the organ in the Convent chapel at Vallombrosa, and played some of the old melodies he loved so well. But one might devote an entire paper to the poet's love of music; here we have another story to tell.

When, at twelve years old, Browning was fruitlessly endeavouring to find a publisher for the early poems which he had collected under the title of *INCONDITA*, a certain Miss Eliza Flower was growing into an intimate acquaintance with his family. One day Mrs. Browning thought of showing her son's neatly written and carefully stitched manuscripts to Miss Flower. That lady promptly carried them off, perused them, read them to her sister (afterwards to become known as Sarah Flower Adams), copied them out before returning them, and persuaded the celebrated William J. Fox, the Unitarian minister, to read the transcripts. In this way was formed a connection which made no slight impression on Browning's personal life, as well as on the lives of the two sisters who had thus constituted themselves the earliest of his critics. It may be worth while to trace the connection in some detail.

The Flowers, Eliza and Sarah, have a place in all biographies of Browning, but little more than a passing reference is made to either of the sisters. They

were the daughters of Benjamin Flower, editor of *THE CAMBRIDGE INTELLIGENCER*, whose name is associated in some slight degree with that of Coleridge. Sarah, as we shall presently see, met the poet in later life and left on record some interesting reminiscences of the meeting. Flower owed his editorship indirectly to the circumstance of his having spent six months in France in 1791 during the most innocent part of the Revolution. His work, of the following year, on the French Constitution was inspired by the impressions thus received; and that work, again, contributed to his being appointed to the chair of the new paper. *THE CAMBRIDGE INTELLIGENCER* had some notoriety among the journals of its time. It was almost the only provincial paper in the country which denounced the war with France, and advocated the removal of the grievances of the Dissenters on the broad ground of religious liberty. It was the advocacy of these views which attracted the great attention the journal received, an attention which was out of all proportion to its ability. In 1799 it gained a notoriety of another kind, when the editor was summoned before the House of Lords for an alleged libel on the Bishop of Llandaff. Flower, it appears, had taken the then daring liberty of censuring the political conduct of the Bishop. The House gave the case a very short hearing; and the hapless editor was sentenced to six months imprisonment in Newgate and a fine of £100. The imprisonment fortunately turned out to be a blessing in disguise. A certain Miss Gould, a young lady who had herself suffered for her opinions, took pity on the intrepid editor and frequently gave him the solace of her company at Newgate. The result was just what might have been expected; Benjamin Flower married the devoted damsel soon after

his release. At the same time he gave up his newspaper and established himself in business as a printer at Harlow, in Essex, where he carried on a monthly magazine called *THE POLITICAL REGISTER* from 1807 to 1811.

From such parentage, and under the influence of such fearless Radicalism, came the two sisters whose names were to be so unexpectedly connected with the name of Browning. The mother died in 1810, when Eliza was seven and Sarah five years old. The father lived until 1829. He was an intimate friend of Mr. Fox, and to that well-known divine and political orator he left the guardianship of his daughters. They had their home at Dalston, nearly opposite to that of Mr. Fox; and, according to Harriet Martineau, the house was much frequented by musical and literary people. The connection with Fox would naturally lead to interesting introductions. He had helped Mill and Dr. Brabant (who gave £800 for the purpose) to found *THE WESTMINSTER REVIEW*, the first article of which he had written; and in course of time he drew around him a distinguished literary circle, including Hazlitt, Campbell, Leigh Hunt, Douglas Jerrold, John Forster, and other more or less luminous lights. When the Flowers came under his guardianship he was the minister of the Unitarian congregation which still meets at South Place, Finsbury; and it was only to be expected that the sisters would yield to the religious influences thus brought to bear upon them.

We hear next to nothing of any theological difficulties on the part of Eliza; but Sarah seems to have been in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity even before the death of her father. Curiously enough, it was to Mr. Fox that she went for counsel. Her father, notwithstanding his ex-

treme opinions in other directions, had, as she declares, no sympathy with any kind of unbelief, and to him she dared not reveal her state. She writes to Fox from Great Harlowe ("not what it once was, and it has added to the feeling of loneliness which has just been coming on,") in 1827, when she was in her twenty-second year, calling her communication "a regular confession of faith,—or rather want of it—from one whom you little suspect guilty of the heinous sin of unbelief." Her mind, she remarks, has been wandering a long time, until now she seems to have "lost sight of that only invulnerable hold against the assaults of this warring world,—a firm belief in the genuineness of the Scriptures." Some remnants of the old faith she still retains: a belief in the existence of "an All-wise and Omnipotent being," and perhaps (for she is not quite sure about it) she can still hold to the Resurrection; but she cannot go to the Bible as she used to go.

Then follows an interesting statement: the cloud, she proceeds to say has come over her gradually, and she did not discover the darkness until she sought to give light to others. "It was in answering Robert Browning that my mind refused to bring forward argument, turned recreant, and sided with the enemy." This was written, let it be remembered, when Browning was only fifteen. What precisely was the nature of the young poet's unsettling opinions it is impossible to determine. Miss Flower was conscious, however, that she had not "examined as far as she might" in her attempts to answer him; and she looked to Fox to direct her enquiries farther. What must she read? She herself suggests "a good ecclesiastical history," but she wants to hear of other resources "against the evil time which is beginning to

set in." The very study, she adds, will be a delight, even if it has not the desired result. This letter appears to have served as a sort of climax to Fox's own doubts. As regards some of her views his correspondent was assuredly in advance of him; and it is claimed for her that she was really the means of emancipating him from the thralldom of Calvinism.

That, however, is a question which it is happily unnecessary to discuss here. It is more to our purpose to note the further connection which Browning had with this young doubter and with her sister. In 1833 PAULINE was published, and in June of that year we find Sarah Flower writing to a cousin: "Have you seen anything of PAULINE? I will send you down one of the first copies. We have renewed an old acquaintance with the author, who is the 'poet-boy' we used to know years ago. He is yet unmaturing, and will do much better things. He is very interesting from his great power of conversation and thorough originality, to say nothing of his personal appearance, which would be unexceptionally poetical if nature had not served him an unkindly trick in giving him an ugly nose."

Such is Sarah Flower's verdict on the young poet, who about this time according to Mr. Fox's daughter, was "just a trifle of a dandy, addicted to lemon coloured kid-gloves, and such things." As for PAULINE that work was less connected with Sarah Flower than with her sister Eliza. Mrs. Sutherland Orr asserts that if, in spite of Browning's denials, any woman inspired the poem, it can have been no other than she. On the same authority, young Robert not only conceived a warm admiration for Eliza's talents, but a boyish love for herself, notwithstanding that she was nine years his senior. It is certain

that he had no ordinary feeling of tenderness and admiration for the lady. In later life he never mentioned her name with indifference. Mr. Moncreux Conway testifies that he could not speak of her early death without evident pain; and in a letter of 1881 to Mr. Dykes Campbell he characterises her as "a very remarkable person." He had begun writing to her when he was twelve or thirteen, and what he called "the few utterly insignificant scraps of letters and verse" which formed his part of the correspondence were preserved by her to the end. Most of these he recovered and destroyed, but one or two notes remain. In 1842, when Eliza Flower had published her *HYMNS AND ANTHEMS*, he writes to thank her for the good news: "all this music I shall be so thoroughly gratified to hear." Some time in 1845 she had arranged to give a concert of her own compositions, and with reference to this Browning wrote: "For me, I never had another feeling than entire admiration for your music,—entire admiration. I put it apart from all other English music I know, and fully believe in it as *the* music we all waited for." Browning believed Eliza Flower to be "a composer of real genius," a belief which was shared by Mendelssohn when, in the course of one of his visits to England, he made the acquaintance of the Flowers.

Nor was this belief so ill-founded as it may appear; for although the name of Eliza Flower is not to be found in the great dictionaries of musicians, she has certainly some claims to remembrance as a composer. THE WESTMINSTER REVIEW said of her, rather generously, it must be admitted, that "in musical composition she attained a higher rank than before her time had been reached by any of her sex," adding that "she has been excelled by no living composer in the

particular order of composition to which she devoted herself." She first became known for a series of *FOURTEEN MUSICAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO THE WAVERLEY NOVELS*, a work which is still so well esteemed that after an interval of sixty-six years a second edition of it has recently been published. She wrote many hymns, hymn-tunes, and anthems for Mr. Fox's congregation, of the choir of which she and her sister were enthusiastic members. It is, however, by the music of that widely popular chorus *Now pray we for our country*, composed in 1842, that she is best known. Browning's opinion of her musical powers was of course exaggerated, pardonably in the circumstances, but not so greatly as has been asserted.

Eliza Flower wrote several letters to Browning, but of these not one seems to be in existence. A letter addressed to Miss Sarah Fox, a sister of the Unitarian minister at Norwich, contains an interesting reference to STRAFFORD on the occasion of its performance at Covent Garden Theatre in 1837. "Were you not pleased," she writes, "to hear of the success of one you must, I think, remember a very little boy years ago? If not, you have often heard us speak of Robert Browning; and it is a great deal to have accomplished a successful tragedy, although he seems a good deal annoyed at the go of things behind the scenes, and declares he will never write a play again as long as he lives. You have no idea of the ignorance and obstinacy of the whole set, with here and there an exception. Think of his having to write out the meaning of the word *impeachment*, as some of them thought it meant *poaching*!"

In this connection it is worth recalling the circumstance that Eliza Flower's friend, Mr. Fox wrote that "most generous notice" of STRAFFORD

in *THE TRUE SUN* which Browning said had "almost made 'my soul well and happy now.'" Eliza seems to have been helpful to Fox and his people in many ways. Fox's published discourses were, it appears, all written out by her from the short-hand notes which, after his fortieth year, he always used in the pulpit. In 1843 the South Place congregation presented her with an alabaster vase as an expression of their affection and gratitude; and when her death took place three years later, the committee paid her a warm tribute as one whose virtues and graces "endeared her to all who knew her, and whose compositions have contributed so materially to the beauty and completeness of the services in this place." Such is the story of Eliza Flower and of her connection with Browning. It is said that John Stuart Mill was at one time an aspirant for her hand, but she was never married.

Turning now for a little to the younger sister, it is rather curious to think of Browning as having indirectly inspired the hymn *NEARER, MY GOD, TO THEE*, by which alone Sarah Flower is likely to be known to posterity. We have seen how the young poet's theology had disturbed her early faith, and although her famous hymn was not written until 1840, thirteen years later, it is not going too far to say that but for Browning's influence it might never have been written at all. For Sarah Flower's bent was originally in quite another direction than in that of hymn-writing. At one time she actually meditated adopting the stage as a profession; and there is a little sketch of hers in *THE MONTHLY REPOSITORY* (1835) called *The Actress*, which shows where her thoughts sometimes were even after she had passed through her moods of mental anguish. Her *VIVIA PERPETUA*, too, which is her principal work, is a

dramatic poem. But although her leanings were thus towards the drama, her literary talent was much more lyrical than dramatic. She was very happily inspired in her hymns, which are marked by great devotional feeling; and *NEARER, MY GOD, TO THEE*, notwithstanding that objections have been raised against its implication of Unitarian doctrine, has long been in the front rank of our sacred lyrics.

Some of Sarah Flower's prose contributions to *THE MONTHLY REPOSITORY*, the Unitarian official organ, are worth looking up. Indeed a set of that forgotten journal might prove a happy hunting-ground for any one who desires to be thoroughly acquainted with the intellectual progress of England some sixty or more years ago. It was purchased by Fox in 1831, being then nothing more than a theological organ; but Fox reduced the theology, and edited it on broad literary lines. He engaged many interesting contributors for its columns. Mill wrote for it under the pseudonym of *Antiquas*; Crabbe Robinson wrote (on Goethe); Harriet Martineau wrote; and, most notable of all, Browning wrote. The first review of *PAULINE*, one of the only three that are known to have appeared, was that written by Fox, and printed in *THE MONTHLY REPOSITORY* for 1833. "We felt certain of Tennyson," says the critic, "before we saw the book, by a few verses which had straggled into a newspaper; we are not less certain of the author of *PAULINE*." This early recognition of his work was never forgotten by Browning. He wrote at the time to Fox: "I can only offer you my simple thanks, but they are of the sort that one can give only once or twice in a life. All things considered, I think you are almost repaid, if you imagine what I feel." Many years after, in 1857, he wrote to the

same generous critic from Italy: "I would, you know I would, always would choose you out of the whole English world to judge and correct what I write myself. My wife shall read this, and let it stand, if I have told her so these twelve years; and certainly I have not grown intellectually an inch over the good and kind hand you extended over my head how many years ago!"

The notice of PAULINE led to Fox seeing rather more of Browning than he had done since the date of the youthful Byronic verses; and one of the results of the greater intimacy was the appearance of certain poems in the Unitarian journal. Thus a sonnet appeared in 1834; in 1835 *THE KING*, introduced afterwards in *PIPPA PASSES*, was printed; and in 1836 came *PORPHYRIA*, *JOHANNES AGRICOLA*, and *STILL AILING, WIND*. Doubtless other poems would have been printed as time went on, but in 1836 Fox gave up the journal to Richard Horne, from whom, in the following year, it passed to Leigh Hunt, and in his hands it shortly afterwards expired.

The most interesting of Sarah Flower's contributions to its pages is that entitled *AN EVENING WITH CHARLES LAMB AND COLERIDGE*, which appeared in the volume for 1835. It is signed *S.Y.* which was meant to stand for *Sally*. The writer recalls "a bright, sunshiny, spring morning, worthy of such an announcement," when a friend called to say that she was going to visit Lamb on the following Tuesday; "Coleridge is to be there, and you shall go with me." Her heart, as she puts it, was on its knees the next minute, and for the two or three intervening days she trod on air. At length the great day arrived, and the two friends "walked together to the well-remembered, quaint-looking house by the

canal." Coleridge, as being evidently the more striking personality, is first described. The writer speaks of his "clear, calm, blue eyes and expansive forehead, of his sweet, child-like, unruffled expression of face," of his "painful voice, which, in spite of all the beauties and treasures it was the means of bringing to you, had yet such an expression in its tone of long suffering and patient endurance as at first to prevent the sensation excited by his extraordinary power of conversation being one of perfect enjoyment." His figure was "tall and somewhat inclined to corpulency; its expression was like that of his voice, —one of suffering borne long and patiently." This suffering, as well as the poet's "resource to the dram of opium," she attributes to his having "mated mistakenly"; he "had never known the reality of love."

Lamb's person was in complete contrast. His "strongly-marked deeply-lined face was furrowed more by feeling than age, like an engraving by Blake, where every line told its separate story, or like a finely chiselled head done by some master in marble, where every touch of the chisel marked some new attribute." She notes the "sweetness and playfulness" that lurked about the corners of his mouth and gave the face "the extraordinary character of flexible granite." His figure was "small even to spareness." His conversation did not flow like Coleridge's; it was "a periodical production of sentences, short, telling, full of wit, philosophy, at times slightly caustic, though that is too strong a word for satire which was of the most good-natured kind." Coleridge, who, "never opened his mouth but out came a precious gem," spoke of death with fear. Lamb kept silence, but after a pause said suddenly: "One of the things that made me question the particular in-

spiration they ascribed to Jesus Christ was His ignorance of the character of Judas Iscariot. Why did not He and His disciples kick him out for a rascal, instead of receiving him for a disciple?" Coleridge "smiled very quietly," but said nothing,—as indeed what could he say to such a piece of unseeing criticism? This was the last time that Sarah Flower saw him. Lamb she saw once after, in the streets. He had "aged considerably, but it scarcely excited melancholy, for Mary was with him, like a good guardian angel. They had that same country air freshness about them; they looked unlike everything around. There was an elderly respectability about them,—not the modern upstart

prig of a word, but the genuine old China, old plate, bright, black, mahogany air, which is now almost departed."

Sarah Flower enjoyed some fourteen years of happy married life as the wife of William Bridges Adams, the civil engineer, who, as De Quincey said of his father, was literary to the extent of having written a book. Mrs. Adams had always been constitutionally weak, and the nursing of Eliza so enfeebled her own health that she gradually sank and died in 1848. Both the sisters are buried, with the rest of their family, in the little cemetery at Foster Street, near their native Harlow in Essex.

J. CUTHBERT HADDEN.

THE GENTLE ART OF CYCLING.

BY AN AMBLER.

I.—SANDFORD AND MERTON.

CYCLING has found its legitimate place at last ; it is as the Gentle Art that it will be with us to the end. Too long has angling usurped the title for which it has no justifiable claim, except when the revolting gentle is used as a bait, and then only in an objective and not a subjective sense. It has always been a matter of astonishment to thoughtful persons why the bloodthirsty art of killing fishes by means of hook and line should ever have been called gentle. The fact is that the art of angling has been able to flourish for so long under false colours simply because Izaak Walton wrote about it in so inimitable a manner. It is not a gentle art, but a cold-blooded, savage, and cruel one. As to its moral effect upon those who practise it, one half hour spent in listening to the fairy tales told at any anglers' club would be sufficient to convince the most sceptical that anti-angling societies are as necessary as anti-drink, anti-meat, or any other of the associations that exercise such beneficent negative influences. Izaak Walton has indeed much to answer for ; but probably all his iniquities will be overlooked because he has preserved for mankind THE MILKMAID'S SONG, which will in future become the special property of the only truly Gentle Art,—that of cycling. What could be more appropriate than, as lover and lass skim along the country lanes, for the swain to sing,—

Come, live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That valleys, groves, or hills, or field,
Or woods and steepy mountains yield ?

It will be understood, of course, that the mountains must not be too "steepy" in character, but just sufficiently sloping to relieve the monotony of the plains below.

And here probably the patience of the policeman, the elderly nervous lady, the nursemaid, the cabman, the busman, and the unfortunate minority who cannot or will not enjoy the pleasures of pedalling will be exhausted. "The gentle art indeed ! How about the Scorchers who slaughters women and children to make a Cockney's bank-holiday ?" My dear friends, I can only say that the Scorchers are Scorchers and not a cyclist, and that before long he will be as extinct as the old bone-shaker. The times have changed. When strong athletic young men first found themselves springing along the ground over pneumatic tyres the temptation to revel in this newly discovered power (I had almost written *sense*) was too great to be withstood. To be held down to a snail's progress of four miles an hour by steady toe-and-heel tramping, and then suddenly to be gifted with the power of flying through the air at the rate of fourteen miles an hour with no more exertion than that entailed in walking four,—this was intoxication that at one time promised to send our youth crazy. But we have altered all that now ; the novelty has worn off, and even vigorous youth is inclined to use the new power with discretion. The Scorchers are seen at rare intervals, but neither he, nor the poor things who grind round the racing-tracks, represent the real cycling world of to-day. That

world consists of the great army of men and women who have transformed cycling into the Gentle Art that has brought nature and man together in a way that not even the arts of poetry and painting have hitherto succeeded in doing. To women especially do we owe this change. The woman who first rode a bicycle little realised what she was doing for her sex and for the race. By the way, what a splendid subject for the silly season! Who was the first woman to ride a bicycle? Think how the maidens and their male champions would deluge the columns of the lucky newspaper with long letters setting forth their claims,—miles of exciting manuscript, free, gratis, and for nothing. Has any poet ever written stanzas to the eye-brows of the first cycle-maiden? Probably not, because even a poet is capable of foreseeing how awkward it would be if it should be discovered that the first lady to ride on bicycles was a respectable, middle-aged, married woman.

Yes, women and elderly men have done much to raise cycling to the Gentle Art. The cycle is no longer a machine for covering the longest distance in the shortest space of time. It is a companion to the solitary, a friend that is always exhilarating and never selfish, an aid to reflection; it gives inspiration to the poet, health and strength to the plain man, vigour to the man of science, and breadth to the philosopher. Imagination fails one in the attempt to conceive what Carlyle might have been had he practised vaulting into the saddle over a pair of sound pneumatics. We should have had no querulous domestic ravings, no dyspeptic beatings of the air, the starry heavens would not have been "a sad sight" had the prophet of Chelsea (Mr. Morley has told us why we must not call him the sage) seen them as he pedalled along the Ripley Road. The adjuncts of cycling would

have taken some of the objectionable philosophic starch out of Thomas. It is all very well for a man who has never tackled the petty details of life to give himself airs over domestic irritations; but when he has once had to repair a tyre on the roadside, and to clean up a machine after a muddy ride, he begins to feel somewhat tolerant towards the shortcomings of domestic servants, and even of wives. Some day I intend to write a lengthy dissertation on the moral influence of cycling, but if I attempt it now I shall never reach Sandford and Merton.

Every one who is a true and honest follower of the Gentle Art always sets out upon a journey, be it long or short, with some particular object in view,—to see whether that grand patch of heather on the other side of the common is yet in bloom, to find out whether the sloes are ripe for the preparation of that famous cordial the name of which must not be mentioned here, to see how the sunset looks through the pines in the distant forest, or to pay a reverent visit to some historic shrine. What a help a cycle is to the enjoyment of these simple pleasures! There is no rush to a railway station, no preliminary wading through time-tables, not even a horse to be harnessed,—no anxiety of any kind. A little oil in the bearings, perhaps a few strokes of the inflator, a turn of the screw of the gear-case, stride over the saddle, and off you go!

What I call my Sandford and Merton run came about in this way. You must know that when you write a certain class of leading-article, it is essential to display a vast knowledge of the subject you are dealing with; you make allusions and references to a great variety of persons, places and things, till your readers marvel as Goldsmith's rustics marvelled at the village schoolmaster—

That one small head could carry all he knew.

In one of these leading-articles on the subject of education the writer had suddenly plumped down a dark and mysterious allusion to the experiments of the author of SANDFORD AND MERTON, which he hinted had led to disastrous results. Is there any boy now in existence who has read SANDFORD AND MERTON? When we were boys it used to be our second gift; first the Bible, then THE HISTORY OF SANDFORD AND MERTON. It is an awful thing to reflect upon now, that some of us had a hazy notion that the two books were by the same writer. The Bible told us not to do the wicked things that we were so often inclined to do, and so did Mr. Barlow, the respected teacher of Harry and Tommy. Probably the present generation of youth only know the book by name, and that knowledge has been gathered through Mr. Burnand's burlesque version. But, notwithstanding all the jeers and jibes that have been levelled at it, and notwithstanding the blunder of making Harry Sandford such a terrible little prig, the book contains more sound advice and common sense, put in a simple style intelligible to children, than any work that has been written since. It is a remarkable fact that this book, which was at one time read by almost every English child, was the only channel through which the ideas of Jean Jacques Rousseau flowed into the minds of the English public, and that without the dear good souls knowing anything about it.

Thomas Day, author of this once famous history, did a very great deal more than write the book with which his name is always connected. He was an exceedingly interesting man, in many ways far in advance of his contemporaries, and when I read this

allusion to his disastrous experiments I wrote off post-haste to my friend the Librarian, asking him what these disastrous experiments were like, because I knew not of them. The Librarian has read almost all the good books that ever were written, and, unlike most omnivorous readers, he has retained a marvellous portion of their contents. He is a great admirer of Thomas Day, and was wroth with the newspaper man for writing of the author of SANDFORD AND MERTON in so scoffing a spirit. He concluded his reply to my question by asking me to send him a sketch of Day's grave, which he had never had an opportunity of seeing. "You are only about twenty-eight miles from the spot," said he, "and could ride over to Wargrave on your bicycle quite easily." How it enhances one's affection for the Gentle Art when from time to time we find it the means of giving pleasure not only to ourselves but also to a dear friend!

I soon discovered Wargrave on the one-inch ordnance map, about a mile and a half north of Twyford, which, as every one knows, is within eight miles of Maidenhead. By the way, when will the public learn to take advantage of the work of the Ordnance Survey? Here are these admirably engraved maps, on the scale of one inch to a mile, to be had at the ridiculous price of one shilling each; and nobody seems to buy them, or even to know of their existence, excepting the surveyors and the lawyers. Each of these shilling maps covers an area of about two hundred and sixteen square miles, and they are a compact compendium of information for the cyclist. Every road and by-road, and many of the field-paths, are all shown with a clearness that is a revelation to those who examine them for the first time. Not

only are the roads easy to trace, but you can tell at a glance whether they are first, second or third-rate metalled roads, or whether they are unmetalled, whether they are hilly or flat, whether they pass through woodland, common, heath, or fields. County and parish boundaries, churches, chapels, historic buildings, post-offices, letter-boxes, and, in sparsely populated districts, roadside inns are all distinctly shown by ingenious methods of draughtsmanship. And now that all this valuable information has been compiled at an enormous expense, it is not taken advantage of as it should be, simply because our foolish old Government does not know how to sell it and popularise it. Four of these ordnance maps, with your place of domicile in the centre, will give you an endless number of excursions which without such aid you might never discover. At the cost of a few pence and a little skill you can mount them on linen and carry them folded up in the pocket of your Norfolk jacket.

Before starting on my run I carefully traced out the best route, writing down on a piece of card, as is my custom, the names of the principal villages and the miles between them. Every ambler should make a point of doing this, as it prevents any unnecessary hurry, enabling you to see at a glance how many miles you have to travel. Starting from a village in Surrey I made my way across a breezy heather-covered common towards the little village of Chobham. It was a delightful August morning, the sun's heat being tempered by fleecy clouds and a cooling breeze. The road across the common, though rather loose at ordinary times, was in excellent condition owing to the rain that had fallen during the night. Blue and brown butterflies were continually fluttering across the road

and the larks were vying with one another to fill the upper air with song. One never seems to lose the sense of glorious freedom and almost wild excitement that comes over one during the first few miles of a morning ride; each morning the old familiar thrill is experienced again, as if for the first time.

Beyond the bridge with the white handrails, where half-a-dozen village boys are bathing in the rivulet, their little brown bodies glistening in the sunshine as the cool water streams off them, the common soon disappears, and thick high hedgerows guard the fields on either side. Here the robins and water-wagtails show all their native impertinence and stand quite fearlessly as the bicycle passes them. Have they found out by experience that the wheelman never interferes with them? That birds do acquire such knowledge there can be no doubt. I have noticed for many years that the sparrows in Trafalgar Square will allow a grown-up person to approach them quite closely, and show no sign of fear; but they will not allow a boy to come within twenty yards of them.

A few minutes' ride along the winding lane brought me into the village street of Chobham, with the usual number of public-houses and its somewhat picturesque church. Chobham is in the enviable position of being five miles from a railway-station, and consequently remains a quiet, uneventful, old-fashioned place, several of its houses being now three hundred years old. Blush, ye jerry-builders of the neighbouring town, who are setting up death-traps as fast as you can; in twenty years' time your works will be in ruins, while these old veterans will be as firm and sound as they have ever been.

Turning out of the village street I entered the pleasant winding lane that

leads towards Bagshot, a lane with fine old trees on either side, the trunks covered with pretty parasitic growths. The road was rough, but not at all bad riding. In Surrey, even on the smallest by-roads, one can generally find a smooth track sufficiently wide for a bicycle, the Haslemere district of course excepted. May I never be led into discoursing on the road between Liphook and Haslemere! The great main roads, well metalled and kept in excellent condition as they generally are, offer seductive temptations to the cyclist; but, after all, there is no riding so pleasant as a quiet amble along a winding lane with trees meeting overhead. One never knows what surprise nature has in store at the next turn; and one gets into close touch with the birds, squirrels, rabbits and wild flowers in these peaceful byways, where no Scorchers is ever seen and where the strident voice of the stout middle-aged lady in knickerbockers is never heard. It is true, however, that sometimes at a turn of the winding lane mankind has a surprise in store for us of a rather unpleasant character. Sometimes it is in the shape of a bullet-headed boy driving a dozen cows or a flock of sheep, who will not make the slightest attempt to keep his charges on one side of the road; sometimes it is a cart loaded with hay or straw which reaches from one side of the road to the other. I once ducked and went underneath the overhanging load of one of these huge ships of the road, but wild horses shall not induce me to repeat the experiment. Country carters, and even fly-men, are as a rule exceedingly courteous, and on narrow roads will draw into the near side in order not to drive the poor wheelman into the ditch.

Bagshot is a nice clean little town, which it is always a pleasure to ride into. You can scent the military

there, and the old lady who gave me some tea on my return in the afternoon told me, with much pride in tone and manner, that the Duke of Connaught passed her door every morning. She even went to the trouble of stepping out into the road and swinging her old arms to and fro, to show me the exact portion of the road along which His Royal Highness passed. Such loyalty was touching in one who had to make both ends meet by providing teas at a shilling a-head, with two new-laid eggs thrown in. Why do these old ladies in country places always boil eggs hard? When I was young and inexperienced I ventured to instruct one of these dames as to how she might always insure having soft-boiled eggs, but I regret to say that my advice was not received in the spirit in which it was offered. It is the common fate of those who endeavour to propagate important truths.

From Bagshot it was a glorious run on a good road through Swinley Forest to Bracknell. I noticed scores of bicyclists on the main road running through Bagshot, but in the midst of this delightful forest scenery I was the only one. It was indeed a place of solitude. As I sat down on the root of a giant oak, to take in a particularly attractive scene of silver birch, oak, elm, and pine, all standing knee-deep, as it were, in green and golden bracken and purple heather of varying shades, there came rattling along a most imposing equipage. Two thoroughbred horses of exceptional stature pranced in their glittering harness; a portly coachman and the most dignified and supercilious footman I had ever seen were perched high up on the box-seat of a sumptuous swinging carriage. And all this was to carry along a poor, wizened-faced old woman who looked very unhealthy and very unhappy! Following

at some distance behind there came a strange group. A man with a rope about his loins attaching him to the shafts of a cart; a woman at his side also harnessed by rope to the cart; on the other side, but well in front, tied to the end of a long rope was a barefooted little boy, certainly not more than six years old, doing his share of tugging at the cart which was loaded with wood, the inevitable baby being perched high up on the top. They came to a standstill as they reached the brow of the hill, the man and woman gasping for breath and wiping the sweat from their faces with their begrimed hands. The little boy grinned through his dirt and danced with delight at the end of his rope. The man and woman soon laughed too, the man doing a little double-shuffle in the shafts, as if to convince all interested that he had some life left in him yet, and the yellow-haired dirty baby up aloft crowed and clapped his hands in the joy of his little life. "Come along, Jimmy; a little more pull, and we'll 'ave 'arf-a-pint at the Cricketers!" Off they went, truly a happy family,—at that moment, at any rate.

I sprang into the saddle, and commenced ruminating over the social contrasts with which we are surrounded, and the many schemes for making every one happy,—those political Morrison's Patent Pills, as Carlyle called them—but a stiffish incline along a lovely glade distracted my attention, and in a very short time I had left the forest behind and was pedalling cheerfully through Bracknell village. The roads here are somewhat confusing, and I was forced to make inquiries. An old white-haired man was passing through the street, carrying a basket of cucumbers, and muttering to himself, "'Ere they are, fine cucumbers, as long as yer arm!" Perhaps he was afraid to repeat such

a fib in too loud a tone. In answer to my inquiries he gabbled on for some time, describing various roads leading to Twyford, and rejecting them all in turn on the ground of some fault in them. Some went too far round, some were too rough, some too hilly, others had all these defects. I managed to gather, however, which was the road to Binfield, and on I went.

From Binfield to Twyford the road was very rough; it was difficult to find a solid channel anywhere, and I ploughed through the sand and shingle with as much resolution as I could command. I relieved the monotony of these heavy roads by pausing occasionally to watch the labourers at work in the fields, or to examine some of the strange-looking machines that are rapidly becoming the common features of the country-side. "Some-day it'll all be done by machines," said a labourer gloomily, as he munched his bread and cheese; "and then we shall all have to go into the workus!"

Over a stony railway-bridge into Twyford I steered, not in a violent race-track style, but with the calm dignity becoming a middle-aged gentleman entering a strange town on a bicycle. Having now travelled nearly thirty miles and being close to my destination, I thought I might reasonably refresh; so hieing me to a humble hostelry I did so with bread and cheese and ale. Anything approaching to heavy eating or drinking during a day's ride is a woful mistake; you cannot digest food properly and pedal a machine at the same time. As to drink, if you imbibe at all freely of alcohol you cannot ride; and the inverse of this being equally true is a strong reason for encouraging young men to take to cycling. If you are thirsty, and most novices suffer terribly from thirst, do not drink anything, but simply rinse out your mouth with water, which will alleviate the

thirst far more effectually than quarts of liquid poured into the stomach. Half the thirstiness is caused by riding with the mouth more or less wide open; on a dry day this means that your tongue, palate, and throat become coated with dust. All that is necessary is to wash this dust away, and try to ride with your mouth shut.

An easy ride of about a mile and a half along a good road brought me to Wargrave. It is only travellers who by long journeying have won the right to membership of the Travellers' Club who are allowed to indulge in superlatives; a mere idler along the roads like myself must be sparing of his adjectives; otherwise I should wax enthusiastic about Wargrave village street. I wonder whether you can find anywhere else so many pretty flower-decked houses, so many smart-looking-inns; has any other village such a wonderful, well-to-do, easy-going air about it? Every house seems to be a quaint little palace of quiet enjoyment. Surely all the male inhabitants must wear brown velvet coats and soft felt hats, and all the women must be beautiful dames of the Du Maurier type. But where were they all? Not a soul was to be seen! Evidently in this peaceful village the afternoon nap is an honoured custom. What shining brass knockers, what highly-polished windows, what pretty white casements, and flowers, flowers everywhere. This must be the place where all the modern poets live; which may explain many of the queer verses that have often caused me to wonder whether I was very dense or very silly. Who could live here without soaring above the common-place, the common language, and the common sense?

As I reflected thus I strolled down a side street, and caught sight of the church and church-yard, just the sort of church you would expect to find in

such a village. Two gables and a square red tower, half-covered with foliage, confront you as you walk across a field in which are some fine old trees that must often have gladdened the eyes of Thomas Day. I searched diligently in the churchyard for the good man's tomb, but not a glimpse of it could I find. There was the bell-ringer's grave, with a stone cross above it, erected by the vicar and parishioners. He deserved a monument, for he had rung the bell for thirty years. What scenes of joy and sorrow the old man must have witnessed! But why the half-hearted praise of the inscription, "Thou hast been faithful in a few things"? Did the reverend and the lay subscribers really mean to imply that the old fellow was unfaithful in many things?

Here was a pretty kettle of fish! A journey of thirty miles and no tomb to be found! Perhaps Thomas Day was not buried here at all. I went into the church a disheartened traveller, and thought of Seneca's diatribe against those who are not content to stay at home. "He that cannot live happily anywhere will live happily nowhere. What is a man the better for travelling? As if his cares could not find him out wherever he goes. Frequent changing of places shows an instability of mind, and we must fix the body before we can fix the soul. We return neither the better nor the sounder; nay, and the very agitation hurts us [there were no pneumatic tyres in Seneca's day]. We learn to call towns and places by their names, and to tell stories of mountains and of rivers; but had not our time been better spent in the study of wisdom and of virtue?"—and so on. How Seneca would have chuckled to find a rambling cyclist in such a plight!

Suddenly I caught sight of the name of Thomas Day on a tablet fixed against the wall of the church.

Here was the solution of the mystery ; our old friend was buried inside the church, and, as I afterwards found out, his bones were lying beneath the very pew in which I was seated. The tablet is a plain, common-place affair, from which I copied the following inscription :

In memory of Thomas Day, Esq., who died the 28th September, 1789, aged 41, after having promoted by the energy of his writings and encouraged by the uniformity of his example the unremitted exercise of every public and private virtue.

*Beyond the rage of time or fortune's
power,
Remain, cold stone, remain and mark
the hour
When all the noblest gifts which
Heaven e'er gave
Were centred in a dark untimely grave.
Oh, taught on Reason's boldest wings
to rise
And catch each glimmering of the
opening skies,
Oh, gentle bosom ! Oh, unsullied mind !
Oh, friend to truth, to virtue and
mankind,
Thy dear remains we trust to this sad
shrine,
Secure to feel no second loss like thine.*

So good a man deserved at least a better epitaph. For Thomas Day was really a good man, who deserved to live in later times when many of his ideas bore fruit and cycling added a new pleasure to life. He found himself a young man of some fortune in a world of much wickedness and suffering. He did not drink hard and ride hard, like most of his contemporaries, but he devoted his life to the task of trying to make the world a better place than he found it. He has been laughed at for his experiment with two Shrewsbury workhouse-girls ; but while this incident and the writing of *THE HISTORY OF SANDFORD AND*

MERTON are remembered, it is almost forgotten that he expended his fortune in trying to transform a waste howling wilderness into a land flowing with milk and honey. He lost £300 a year by trying to make a barren land yield some harvest, but he said bravely and nobly : " I consider the pleasure of everything to lie in the pursuit, and therefore, while I am contented with the conveniences I enjoy, it is a matter of indifference whether I am five or twenty years in completing my intended plans. I have besides another material reason, which is, that it enables me to employ the poor."

I went out of the quiet church, into the pretty meadow beyond the churchyard, where the grand old planes, limes, and poplars made summer music overhead. While I was sitting in the shade, making my sketch of the church, the sexton came towards me. I was shocked at his appearance. He had none of the proper characteristics of his calling ; he was young, jaunty, and I observed with particular regret that he was clean ; he might indeed have passed for a respectable carpenter. Did he know of the grave of Thomas Day ? " Yes, under the pew, under the stone on the wall ; 'ee was thrown orf 'is 'orse."

" Yes," I murmured sadly, thinking of Day's untimely end.

" Thrown orf 'is 'orse," repeated the sexton in a defiant tone. The man seemed to revel in the fact ; probably it was the only one he knew of concerning poor Day. I asked him whether many people came to see the grave.

" You're about the sixth this year," he replied.

So the author of *THE HISTORY OF SANDFORD AND MERTON* is not quite forgotten.

AN EPISODE IN THE HISTORY OF THE COMEDIE FRANÇAISE.

It was in a moment, as it were, that the favoured comedians of His Majesty (a doomed, forlorn Majesty who had virtually ceased to reign) found themselves in the whirlpool of the Revolution. The date was November, 1789. The Bastille had fallen; the nobles were flying; Louis and his Queen were under rigorous watch in the Tuileries; and Paris was in the grip of the National Assembly.

Twenty-five years earlier Voltaire, in exile at Ferney, had written to Saurin (author of the tragedy SPARTACUS, and adaptor of THE GAMESTER): "Some day we shall introduce Popes on the stage, as the Greeks represented their Atreus and Thyestes, to render them odious. The time will come when the massacre of St. Bartholomew will be made the subject of a tragedy." His prediction was verified a little sooner than he may have anticipated. Early in the summer, as the ascendancy of the Tiers-état became manifest, Marie Joseph Chénier dramatised this dark history in order to expose the crown and the mitre to additional odium. But Louis was still king in name, and he declined to sanction CHARLES IX. His players, most of whom remained loyal to the authority to which they owed their corporate existence and their privileges, were unwilling to oppose his wishes; but revolutionary Paris was of another mind. Chénier went up and down the town declaring that his tragedy had been arbitrarily suppressed, and the pit of the Théâtre Français was clamorous for it. Fleury, most elegant and most polished of his Majesty's comedians, as fine a gentleman off

the stage as he was on it, at length stepped forward, for the play that was being given could get no hearing. M. Chénier's piece, he said, could not be put in rehearsal until the necessary permission had been received. "Necessary permission!" a wrathful pittance leaped upon his bench and cried. "We've suffered too much from censorship, and in future we mean to have what we want." "Monsieur," returned the courteous player, "the laws which have governed the Comédie Française for a hundred years are still binding on it, and we cannot break them." "Good!" said the spokesman of the pit. "You had better consult the municipality on the subject." Fleury gave an undertaking that this should be done, and the next day a deputation of the players waited on the representatives of the Commune, who, however, with somewhat unusual forethought, forbade the piece, on the ground that it might compromise public tranquillity.

Such a decision, it may be imagined, was little to the liking of the pit; the agitation increased, and in five days the authorities, yielding to the general demand, sent to request MM. les Comédiens Français (no longer, be it noted, *du Roi*) to place CHARLES IX. on their stage as soon as possible. Needless to say, the King had not removed his veto, but the players had tasted the temper of the times, and another refusal was scarcely to be hazarded. CHARLES IX. was put in rehearsal, and November 4th was the day named for the first performance. Naudet had been cast for the part of Coligni; Vanhove (with his Flemish accent and monotonous delivery) for

L'Hôpital; Madame Vestris (who said to Chénier: "I am really putting myself in peril for you. This queen-mother is so detestable that I am certain to be shot at!") for Catharine; St. Fal (the wig-maker's son, and an excellent tragedian) for Henry of Navarre; St. Prix (with a figure "to remind spectators of the Homeric heroes") for the fierce Cardinal,—but who should play the marksman of the Louvre balcony, Charles himself? After much deliberation between the author and the senior members of the company, the part had been offered to, and eagerly accepted by, one of the youngest. This bold young man, whose age was then only twenty-three, was the son of a French dentist very prosperously settled in Cavendish Street, London, who had reared him almost exclusively on Voltaire and Rousseau. As a youth, he had played Hamlet in English at the Hanover Square Rooms; and Burke, Fox, Sheridan, and the Duchess of Devonshire had counselled him to make the stage his profession. In Paris, whither his father had sent him to manage his business in the Rue Mauconseil, Lord Harcourt had introduced the young man to Molé, who had just taken the town as Almaziva in Beaumarchais's *MARIAGE DE FIGARO*; and it was through the influence of Molé that he made his first appearance at the Français, as Séide in Voltaire's *MAHOMET*, in October, 1787. His success was instantaneous, but the fixed usages of the House of Molière restricted him thereafter to parts of no importance; he must wait his appointment as the "double" of one of the senior members of the company. The name of this young player was François Joseph Talma, and his performance as Charles, the first notable character that had been assigned to him, was to mark a turning-point in his career.

On the night of the 4th, Republi-

can Paris swarmed in the pit of the Français, and right in the middle sat Camille Desmoulins and the burly Danton. There were Royalists present also, and they did their royal best to have the piece condemned; but the opposition out-shouted them from first to last, and the new tragedy went with a kind of roar. The success of the night was Talma's. He came on the stage, we are told, a living portrait of Charles, and Fleury says of one particular scene that the sublimity of the young actor's conception filled them all with amazement.¹ Danton declared that the play should have for second title *L'ÉCOLE DES ROIS*. "Beaumarchais," said he, "killed the aristocracy; Chénier has cut the throat of royalty in France."

But the fate of CHARLES IX. hung yet in the balance. The clergy urged the King to suppress it, but poor Louis doubted whether he had the power to do so. Still, one might try; and the Gentlemen of the Chamber, through whom the King had been in the habit of instructing or counselling the players, were despatched with an order for the withdrawal of the piece. A little to the surprise of the whole Court, perhaps, the order was instantly obeyed; but neither the players nor Paris had seen the last of CHARLES IX.

Talma's expulsion from the historic theatre, the next event of significance, was a consequence rising more or less directly from this affair. Chafing under the loss of the first fine part that had fallen to him, a part moreover which had made him famous in a night, he attempted to break through the rule which gave the senior actors a monopoly of the leading characters. Madame Vestris (who had been twenty years in the company) and one or two others sided with him, but the dominant party stood firm, and

¹ MÉMOIRES DE FLEURY, 1757-1820.

the attempt failed. Now, however, the House of Molière was divided against itself; on the one side stood an ardently Republican section, on the other the Reactionaries, who held to the fast-sinking vessel of royalty. The latter were the stronger party, and, careless of the danger which menaced every supporter of the Crown, they remained deaf to the advances of the National Assembly,—who had just restored to them the rights so long denied by the Church.

The revolutionary Press took up the cause of Talma, and Camille Desmoulins's new journal, *RÉVOLUTIONS DE FRANCE ET DE BRABANT*, published an article against Naudet, in which he was accused of interfering with the liberty of the stage, of aiming a blow at the young tragedian, and of other grave misdemeanours. Talma himself had the bad taste to write a reply to the article, affirming the charges against his fellow-player to be true. A general meeting of the Comédie Française was convened in the green-room, and on the motion of Fleury it was unanimously resolved that Talma should be expelled from the theatre. Revolutionary Paris rallied to his side, and the new Municipality itself took the matter in hand. Fleury and his associates were requested to appear before Mayor Bailly at the Hôtel de Ville. Bailly was urbanity itself, but he informed the actors that their theatre was now a national institution, that their rules (which he advised them to regulate) could not entitle them to interfere with the gratification of the public and the prosperity of art, and that, in a word, M. Talma must be reinstated. The players withdrew protesting; they protested for a week or more, and then Talma was recalled. He did not stay long with them. The Assembly had already passed a decree which was in effect one of free trade

in theatrical matters, enabling any body of actors to represent new plays in Paris. This was presently extended to include the works of dead authors, which meant the complete abolition of the monopoly which the King's players had enjoyed since the days of Molière. New theatres arose; and Talma, taking with him Vestris, Dugazon, and others, went over to the Théâtre Français de la Rue de Richelieu.

From this date, however, the Comédie Française began to be viewed with suspicion and disfavour by the extreme Revolutionary party. The pit grew more and more turbulent, more and more hostile; and Fleury notes that, in rubbing on the rouge at night, his hand trembled at the thought of what he might have to undergo. For all this, neither he nor his comrades were shaken in their devotion to the hopeless cause of the Crown; and of that devotion they were to give one signal proof which, in the circumstances, seems worthy to be called heroic. The royal family were now prisoners in the Temple; their case was even then desperate, and scarcely less desperate, perhaps, was the case of all who were known to be, or suspected of being, in sympathy with them. At such a fateful moment, when the *tapes-dur*, those satyr-like janissaries of the Revolution, and the *furies de la guillotine* were dancing the Carmagnole round the red-running scaffold of Samson, the King's comedians had the courage to produce a piece by Laya, written expressly in the interests of the abandoned Louis. It was almost like stretching out their necks to the headsman; but they did it, and put their hearts into lines which aimed almost directly at Robespierre, Marat, and the whole faction of the Mountain. The Jacobins contrived to suppress the *AMI DES LOIS* after the first performance, but the doings of

the royalist players were now observed more closely and malignantly than ever. Their Ides of March were near.

Late in the summer of 1793 François de Neufchâteau, a reforming member of the Legislative Assembly, who had thought with Laya that France was dancing the wrong road to freedom, wrote and sent to the Comédie a new version of PAMELA. Just half a century earlier, when, thanks to Voltaire's almost regal influence in letters, Frenchmen of education had become familiar with the language of Shakespeare and Milton, Pierre Lachaussee, who has been styled the inventor of the *comédie attendrissante*, or sentimental comedy, produced on the stage of the Français a five-act play in verse, adapted from Richardson's prodigious novel. It was not to the taste of a Parisian audience, but in its printed form the work had a host of readers, and in the course of fifty years PAMELA became one of the best-known tales in France.

This adaptation, which was called PAMÉLA, OU LA VERTU RECOMPENSÉE, and which was at once accepted by the Comédie Française, escaped in some way the jealous censorship of the Reign of Terror. It was given on August 1st, 1793. Consciously or not on its author's part, the tone of PAMÉLA reproduced the tone of the AMI DES LOIS, and it sealed the fate of the players. Their Ides of March were come. PAMÉLA ran for eight nights, and was then suspended. Neufchâteau made a pretence of revising it, and the actors had the hardihood to announce a ninth performance. The curtain rose, and the piece went forward, the pit packed with *tapes-dur* in their fox-skin caps and jackets smeared with the blood of that day's victims. At a line spoken by Fleury, some one sprang up in the pit and shouted: "That passage has been prohibited by the Committee of Public Safety!" "*Pardon,*"

returned the imperturbable Fleury, "the Committee of Public Safety has passed every word of it." There was a scuffle, and the disturber found himself ejected. It seems that he ran at once to the Jacobins' Club, to denounce the actors at the Comédie for poisoning public opinion, and speaking lines which the censor had forbidden. An hour later, as the curtain was rising for the second piece, news was carried to the green-room that the military had surrounded the theatre. "Shall we run?" said pretty Mlle. Lange to Fleury at the wings. "*M'amie,*" answered Fleury, "it would be of no use. We are safer where we are. This is our 10th of August, *m'amie.*" The piece was played to the end, and the players were allowed to quit the theatre; but all of them were arrested in their homes before midnight. It was one hundred and thirteen years since the association of the Comédie Française had been formed, in 1680, by letters patent under the royal seal; and now the doors of their play-house were closed. Let us follow the hardy players into their strange captivity.

II.

Nothing in Europe has matched the spectacle of the prisons of Paris during the Reign of Terror. Mirabeau, Linguet, Latude (or the person who wrote in that name) the compiler of the ARCHIVES DE LA BASTILLE, and others, have some poignant tales to tell of the prisons of the Monarchy; but none of these can match the histories of the Revolutionary prisoners, of Saint-Méard especially, whose AGONIE DE TRENTE-HUIT HEURES falls on the ear at this day like the dripping of blood from a mortal wound. When the September Massacres were over, that butchery of a hundred hours between the afternoon of Sunday the 2nd and the evening of

Thursday the 6th (1792), it might have seemed that Ossa had been hurled on Pelion; but the swift, uninterrupted slaughter of those five successive days was followed, just one year later, by the protracted sufferings of a heterogeneous mass of some thousands of Royalists and Republicans, flung together in the strangest pell-mell, in all the prisons of Paris. The common gaols were not enough to hold them; palace and convent were made dungeons for the nonce. In the Conciergerie lay Marie Antoinette (to be followed at no long interval by Charlotte Corday) who could hear the drunken turnkeys, with their dogs at their heels, spelling out their roll of prisoners at lock-up. In Sainte-Pélagie was Madame Roland, stinting herself to save food for the poorer prisoners. In the Luxembourg was the flower of the French aristocracy, keeping up the old etiquette, with cards and music of an evening, and one ear straining for the footstep of Guiard, or his deputy Verney, coming with the list of those who were to die on the morrow. In the Abbaye, along with others, were the three hundred families of the Faubourg St. Germain, flung in there on a single night; the fourteen young girls who went to the guillotine in one tumbril, looking, it was said, like a basket of lilies; and the nuns of the convent of Montmartre, who were guillotined in one batch. And in all these prisons, when death, with or without trial, came to be regarded as certain, was to be seen that curious exaltation of spirit which is shown by the playing of the *guillotine* game in the Conciergerie, by the last supper of the Girondins in the same prison, by the voluntary sacrifice of friend for friend or parent for child, if the chance offered, and by the attitudes in death of Marie Antoinette, Danton, Madame Roland, and Charlotte Corday.

Into this world turned topsy-turvy, a world wherein the reality must have appeared to each new-comer like some wild phantasmagoria, were cast, on the 2nd of September, 1793, the players of the Comédie Française. It is not certain whether the ladies of the company went to Saint-Lazare or to Sainte-Pélagie; the men were despatched to the Madelonnettes, erstwhile the asylum, or convent, of repentant Magdalens. Chief among them were Fleury, Vanhove, Dazincourt, Molé, Champville, St. Prix, and Dupont; all of them well-known men, of whom several had received special marks of royal favour. Fleury, one of the best-known men in Paris, had been on the boards since the age of seven, when, as a rosy-cheeked, black-eyed boy, he made his *début* at Nancy in the presence of ex-King Stanislaus, and was kissed in the royal box by Madame de Boufflers. He had pulled Voltaire's wig at Ferney, and in return for that impertinence the great man gave him some lessons in acting. His impersonation of Frederick the Great, on the eve of the Revolution, was so life-like that Prince Henry of Prussia, hardly able, it is said, to believe that his brother had not risen from the grave, presented him with Frederick's own snuffbox, saying, "Nobody knows better than yourself how to use it." Molé, famous both in tragedy and comedy, had been petted at Court, and the young nobles used to flock to the theatre to take lessons in deportment from him. When he fell ill in 1767, the street in which he lived was blocked all day by the coaches of inquirers, and the night's performance was regularly preceded by a report of his condition. Dazincourt, a refined and often brilliant comedian, was the original representative of the barber in *LE MARIAGE DE FIGARO*. "We

were no ordinary victims," writes Fleury, with the characteristic self-importance of his profession, "we were a literary corporation, bearing with us into exile all the gracious past of France. We represented in miniature all that gives charm to life, and we were honoured as a body who had shown courage and a united front at a time when, apart from the trivial courage of dying, all courage had vanished, all union had been shattered."

All the prisons of Paris at this date were in a state as wretched as the Newgate described by Howard, and Les Madelonnettes would seem, according to the authors of *LES PRISONS DE PARIS*, to have been almost the worst. To say that the prisons of the Terror were overcrowded would be rather to flatter the memories of those who were responsible for filling them. They were packed to their very utmost capacity of accommodation. The Madelonnettes, contrived to hold about two hundred prisoners, was charged with a complement of more than three hundred. On one floor, in cells five feet square and nine feet high, space was made for no fewer than twelve sleeping-cots about eighteen inches wide. The cells had two small windows protected by crossed iron bars. Even with twelve beds to a cell, there were many prisoners who had to make shift in the corridors on mattresses well stocked with vermin. Marino of the police, who was the inspector of this prison, had an unvarying answer for all complaints: "You won't be here long; this is only your ante-chamber. You must learn to wait. Oh, you shall have prisons big enough by and by, citizens!" The Madelonnettes had a garden and a spacious courtyard, but Marino forbade their use to his prisoners, who were forced to take their exercise in the corridors.

When the players of the Français arrived at this noisome hold, it was already in the occupation of the suspects of the Mountain, the Contrat-Social, and the Marchés, not to mention a motley crew of thieves, forgers, and cut-throats. In the beginning they were all herded together,—players, political offenders, criminals; but the last-mentioned were presently sent to an upper limbo of the prison, and the captives of the Revolution were distributed in the three remaining storeys. Fleury tells us how they busied themselves in trying to make their cells more habitable; "each of us a veritable Crusoe, nailing up shelves, putting down carpets, and so forth, until an order came to deprive us of all our tools." After infinite pains he succeeded in making himself a sort of desk, and adds that he possessed besides half a pair of snufflers: "I don't mean that the snufflers were incomplete, but the other half belonged to Rochelle." And he goes on: "How we used to criticise one another's work, and brag of our own! I can still recall with a smile the pitying glance I bestowed on Champville's carpentry, and his air of commiseration as he watched me struggling with the saw." Relaxations less agreeable than these were the domestic offices which each had to bear his part in,—making the beds, sweeping and scouring the cells and corridors. Fleury rallies St. Prix, going about with his broom shouldered like a musket, sweeping here and there, very dignified but very clumsy, and apostrophising himself in an undertone: "Poor Agamemnon, at what a pass do I behold you!"

But this life which, on the surface, seems not much more depressing than a picnic on a rainy day, had its ever-flowing under-current of tragedy. One guest or another (they were not yet sweeping them out by *fournées*, or

batches, from the Madelonnettes) was always receiving his summons to withdraw. Ex-Lieutenant General of Police, M. de Crosnes, was one of the company in the Madelonnettes. He had distinguished himself by his charitable zeal in arranging a scheme under which the richer prisoners became the almoners of the poorer, finding them in food, clothing, and other necessities. One night M. de Crosnes is playing trictrac in Fleury's cell with another proscribed noble, M. de Latour Dupin, when his name echoes through the corridors. "No need to ask," writes Fleury, "what that summons boded!" "Yes, yes, I'm ready!" says De Crosnes; and rose at once, as if he had an order to give. "Gentlemen," says he to his cell-mates, "I fear I must bid you good-bye! It is evidently my turn to-night. I could not have spent my last hours more pleasantly. Good-bye, and God bless you!" And he goes out as calmly as though he had been going to an audience of the King. Sometimes, of course, it was more painful than this; some prisoner, who had hoped against hope that his petition had been heard, would receive his answer in that same callous summons, and, soul and body failing him, would be carried half-inanimate to his death.

In all these prisons of the Terror, rigorous as the orders were at the last, much depended upon the personal character of the *concierger*, or governor. In three or four instances the prisoners were exceptionally happy in their chief. One must not forget, for example, the heroism of Bouchotte, governor of Sainte-Pélagie, who, when he heard the red bonnets nearing his prison during the September massacres, slipped his prisoners out by a subterranean passage, after having made his warders bind his wife and himself with cords in the court-yard of the gaol. "Citizens," he said to the butchers, when

they had forced the doors, "you are just too late! My birds have flown. They got wind of your coming, tied my wife and myself like this, and forced the bars." This is the handsomest story told of the governors of the Revolutionary prisons; but Benoit of the Luxembourg, and Richard, who was little less than guardian angel to Marie Antoinette in the Conciergerie, have left us grateful memories. Not less fortunate were the prisoners of the Madelonnettes in their M. Vaubertrand. "All contemporary chronicles, and the testimonies of all the prisoners," say the authors of *LES PRISONS DE L'EUROPE*, "unite in praise of the humanity of Vaubertrand and his wife." It was Vaubertrand who insisted on a decent classification of the prisoners, who substituted beds for the cots in the cells, and who tried by every means to render the lot of his prisoners more tolerable and less humiliating. But neither the cares of Vaubertrand nor the precautions of Dr. Dupontet, his indefatigable lieutenant, could keep disease from a place in which the air was always fetid, the food indifferent, and the supply of water wretchedly inadequate. Epidemic sickness of some sort was common in nearly all the prisons of the Revolutionary epoch. There was fever in the Conciergerie and fever in the Luxembourg; and in the Madelonnettes an epidemic of small-pox, which raged during many weeks. In none of these prisons was there any fit hospital; in the Madelonnettes none whatever, and the authorities persisted in their cruel refusal to open the court-yard. Brisk Dupontet (whose benevolent activity is in fine contrast with the gross indifference displayed by most prison surgeons of his time) made the best of a heart-breaking situation. He insisted on the doors and windows being opened at certain hours, the

cells and corridors being sprayed with vinegar, and so forth. For the prisoners who were still in health he prescribed abundant exercise before dinner and supper, and to give an interest to this he organised a series of military promenades in the corridors. "We must have looked queer enough," writes Fleury. "The light in the galleries was so feeble that many of us carried candles. Imagine us on the march through those dim passages; pale faces which would not have smiled for an empire; here a nodding night-cap, there a flowered dressing-gown or a white piqué overall; and the yellow rays of the candles creating the most grotesque effects as we advanced, wheeled, or formed in line. Madame Vaubertrand, who would come sometimes to watch us, was kind enough to say that we were worthy a canvas of Rembrandt; the truth is, I fear, that we deserved to be mistaken for a caricature by Callot." Fleury's light-glancing humour comes often to the rescue; and he and his fellow-comedians, with their trained art of playing upon the emotions of others, must have softened and brightened many a dreary hour in the prison.

Meanwhile they were not forgotten of their enemies. They had lain seven months in prison, had learned the deaths of Marie Antoinette, of the twenty-two Girondins, of Egalité Orléans, Madame Roland, and Mayor Bailly, when Collot d'Herbois wrote to Fouquier-Tinville to hasten the case against them. Collot had been in touch with the theatre. He had been hissed off the stage at Lyons: he was the author, or adaptor, of a piece which had failed at the Français; and a sister of Fleury had assisted him to escape from the prison of Bordeaux, when he lay there under sentence of death on a conviction for felony. As morals went at that

chaotic era, he had grounds sufficient for his hostility against the Comédie Française; it was the day of days for the wreaking of personal and private vengeance.

In very many cases the fate of the accused was sealed before the *dossier*, or brief, had been submitted to the docile tribunal. The judge merely passed sentence in accordance with the instruction conveyed to him by means of the capital letter in red ink on the margin of the brief. Thus, *R.* stood for acquittal, *D.* for banishment, and *G.* for the guillotine. In cases of which the docket had been branded with the fatal *G.* appeal was seldom allowed.

Six of the players were singled out for immediate trial, or rather, for immediate judgment, and the six briefs bore the emblem of the guillotine. Fleury, Dazincourt, and Mlles. Louise Contat, Emilie Contat, Raucourt, and Lange were d'Herbois's chosen victims. Françoise Marie Antoinette Raucourt, one of the most beautiful and stately women on the stage, had made her first appearance at the Français in 1772. She had risen quickly into fame, and Republican Paris remembered with envious hatred the splendour of her appearance as she drove through the streets to the theatre. Louise Contat, who had appeared four years later, was a beauty of a different type, and the best of all Susannes in Beaumarchais's play; her sister Emilie was a dainty little coquette on and off the stage. Annie Lange, barely twenty-one years of age, had but just made her mark; she was the Pamela of the piece which had wrought the downfall of the players.

"You will bring them before the Tribunal," wrote Collot to Fouquier-Tinville, "on the 13th Messidor." But the 13th Messidor passed, and the players had not appeared at Tinville's bar. Had Collot d'Herbois

relented? No; but a very singular thing was happening at the Bureau des Pièces Accusatives, the office through which all proofs of royalist guilt had to pass before being delivered to the public prosecutor. At the daily risk of his life, the clerk in charge of these documents was destroying them wholesale. The name of this forgotten hero of the Terror was Charles Labussière, once low-comedian of the obscure Théâtre Mareux, who was using his position of trust under the bloody masters of the Revolution to save the lives of hundreds of innocent creatures. Shift the scene a moment, and watch at his stealthy task of salvation the one-time humble player of the humble Mareux Theatre, the favourite butt of the grisettes and shopboys in the pit. There was not in all France at this hour a braver man than he.

My first care [he used to say] was to save as many fathers and mothers as I could. Having abstracted a certain number of *pièces accusatives*, I locked them carefully away in my oaken drawer. But as it was absolutely necessary to leave some work for the executioner, I had to cast a certain number of documents into the fatal portfolio (feeling as if I were myself dropping the heads into Samson's basket!). Imagine, however, the joy I felt in rescuing the others! But just here arose a very embarrassing question: What should I do with the papers I had removed? Burn them? Impossible; there wasn't a fire, for it was the height of summer. They were too bulky to carry away, for everyone was searched on leaving the office. I racked my brains for a means of escape for my *protégés*. My forehead burned, and I turned to bathe it in the bucket of water which stood in a corner of the room to cool our wine for *déjeuner*. That plunge into the bucket was an inspiration—why not diminish the bulk of my precious papers by soaking them in the water? Carrier had his *noyades* of death; I would have my *noyades* of salvation! Quick! I threw my papers

into the bucket, softened and rolled them into pellets. The pellets were easily bestowed in my pockets; I slipped out unquestioned, stepped across to the Bains Vigier, set a-going my little flotilla of innocents, and watched anxiously enough their easy progress down the banks of the Place de la Revolution.

So, in a moment, the story has come to an end,—for the dockets of the six comedians of a Majesty who had long since been decapitated had swum with the rest of the flotilla. The fraud upon the Committee of Public Safety was discovered, and fresh briefs were prepared against the players. But their Ides of March were now not only come but gone; for the ink was not dry upon the second set of briefs when the fateful pistol-shot in the Hall of Convention announced that the Reign of Terror was over, and the 10th Thermidor reversed the decree of the 13th Messidor.

Three sentences may make a fitting postscript. Labussière escaped, and told his story often; "In the brusque way he had," writes our friend Fleury, "with an odd little stammer, and an up-and-down movement of his black eyebrows." Talma, whose passionate Republicanism had carried him safely through the Terror, was the first to welcome on their release the comrades who had banished him; and there is a pretty story of Louise Contat falling on his neck, when she was told that he had spent half his savings to get possession of a letter in which Fleury had incriminated himself in the interests of Charlotte Corday. At a dinner given by Dazincourt all differences were healed: the House of Molière rose upon its ruins in a single night; and, to the joy of Paris, the reunited players made their first appearance in *THE CID*.

TIGHE HOPKINS.

SAYWARD'S RAID.

(A TALE OF THE BEHRING SEA.)

TOWARDS dusk one lowering evening Clinton Sayward, master and part-owner of the sealing-schooner *Caribou*, lounged across the wheel with a look of sullen discontent stamped upon his weather-beaten face. Drifting mist walled in a narrow circle of leaden-coloured water, across the centre of which the schooner rolled, heaving her streaming bows aloft as she met the long grey seas, and then, with a vicious jerk which set the rain-soaked canvas thundering overhead and a wild clatter of blocks, plunging down into the hollow beyond. It had been blowing hard for a week, and now the wind had fallen light and a searching drizzle oozed out of the mist, but the crew thought little of that. Over a wide belt on either side of the line where the blue depths of the Pacific shoal into the muddy green of the Behring Sea, the lonely waters of the north are alternately swept by tempest or veiled in haze and rain.

Twenty Siwash Indians and ten white seamen lounged about the cumbered deck, where the sealing-boats were nested one inside the other six feet high. They wore a curious combination of canvas and fur; but the stalwart figure at the helm was wrapped in a coat of pure white hair, which would have cost him its weight in silver but that he slew its original owner upon an ice-pack with a sealing-rifle. A fetid odour of blubber and fur-skins hung over the schooner, and a group of Siwash were crouched forward about a pot of rancid sea-oil, nibbling strips of half-dried halibut which they dipped therein. There was, however, neither talk nor laughter

among them, though the Indians of the coast are a light-hearted race, for the shadow of discontent brooded heavily over every soul on board.

Sayward had been very unfortunate that cruise. Once, when he came across a large herd of fur-seals going north, a sudden gale had rendered it impossible to launch his boats. Twice afterwards, when the Indians were shooting the fine-furred *holluschak* right and left in a flat calm, a Russian cruiser had warned them off. Each time Sayward felt sure that he was well outside the Muscovite limits, but it is not wise to argue with the commander of a Russian gunboat on the high seas. If the sealer's tales are true, the officers of the Czar occasionally do very high-handed things, and the case of a free-lance fisher has more than once led the representatives of three great nations to the verge of a misunderstanding. Therefore Clinton Sayward cherished a bitter dislike to the Russian, as also did his crew, for they were paid on shares, and the *Caribou* was returning south with very few skins on board.

Presently the drizzle ceased, and a sickly gleam of moonlight filtered down through the thinning vapour, while the breeze freshened a little and the slatting canvas hardened out and listed the schooner over. Soon a dull vibrating boom, the roar of the long ocean heave piling itself upon smoking reef and boulder-strewn beach, came out of the darkness, and the air was filled with a rush of wings as a flight of arries and burgomaster-gulls went by.

"Haul lee sheets, and keep your

eyes lifting, forward there! There'll be mighty little left of any of you in ten minutes if we blunder among the ledges," said Sayward, wrenching upon the wheel. Then, as the schooner came round a little, he added to his Mate: "We must be near the Komandorskies or Copper Islands, but with the last ten days' thick weather I can't say exactly where. If this everlasting haze would only clear!"

The Caribou slid on into the darkness, the black water breaking apart beneath her bows with a musical gurgle, while her crew listened anxiously to the sound of the surf, until a clamour of voices rose up from the bows which was lost and drowned in a sudden thunderous roar. Close ahead, a great column of foam shot up vertically, followed by a chaotic swirling and frothing, and the air was filled with spray. The little schooner rolled wildly down the back of a sea-slope, and as she did so the sound died away in a hollow rumble.

With a cry of "Ready about!" Sayward jammed down the helm. There was a rush of feet across the deck, the head-sails fluttered over, and as the Caribou came round upon her heel every man on board held his breath. Sudden death on a submerged reef, over which only the largest rollers broke, lay close at hand, and her crew knew well that one blow against that hidden ledge would crush the vessel in like an eggshell. Slowly she gathered way on the other tack, and when the water gurgled along her run again and the danger slid astern, the helmsman felt that his brow was damp with cold perspiration as he slackened his grip on the wheel. Now a giant wall of rock loomed out through the haze, its summit crowned by a tall cross, the ocean rolling in weighty ridges among the kelp-beds at its feet.

"East end of Loteska promontory, and good anchorage in St. Peter's

Bay. We had better bring up inside the reef to-night," said the Mate. "I've been here before."

"So have a good many more who wouldn't care to own up to it," answered the Skipper, and some of the white seamen smiled grimly as they went forward to clear the anchor. In spite of American and Muscovite vigilance a certain percentage of the skins obtained by the independent sealers are taken illegally on beaches where, under a very heavy penalty, no unauthorised hunter may land.¹

With her boom-foresail lowered the Caribou wallowed slowly along parallel to the dim coast-line, and a wild project entered the Skipper's brain, for a peculiar piping and roaring sound came out of the darkness, louder far than the vibrating monotone of the surf. At one moment it resembled a shrill blowing-off of steam, and the next the roar of breakers on a reef, while the whole formed a chaotic din, the like of which may only be heard around the Komandorskies and the surf-beaten Pribyloffs. For two months or so each year this ceaseless clamour rings out through the fog that wraps these lonely isles, and the whalers, groping northward through the mist, listen for it as they would for the warning of a light-ship syren. It is the cry of the big see-catch, the fur-seal bull, which hauls up in countless thousands on shingle-spit and sloping ledge, and there fights hard, and often to the death, for a few square yards of ground whereon its meek-eyed consorts may lie in peace. For some fourteen days the mad struggle goes on, and then, after the cows come up out of the ocean, throughout six long weeks or more the see-catch neither eats nor sleeps, but keeps grim watch over his seraglio, roaring incessant defiance to all that approach.

¹ The writer once sailed in these vessels himself.

At last, as the Caribou slipped inside the jutting reef which guards St. Peter's Bay, Sayward called his Mate aside. "With the gunboats hounding us day and night there's no chance for deep-water hunting now," he said. "Besides, I can't forget how that Russian sank our best whaleboat, in neutral waters, too, by the sights. Three hundred dollars she cost with the guns, and I'm going to get even with the Russ to-night. We'll land three boats, kill all the *holluschak* we can, and slip out again at dawn."

"It's a risky business," answered the Mate thoughtfully; "but it's often done, and I've been in this kind of thing before. The seals are hauling out earlier than usual, and the Russians will hardly have turned up yet. You never need look for them before the middle of the month, old Marvin used to say, and he had good reason to know their ways. What's the matter with trying any way?"

Sayward put the helm a-lee, and the Caribou swept round head to wind, her damp canvas fluttering noisily. The anchor and grinding cable thundered down, and three light boats swung out over the rail. Squat, brown-skinned Siwash hunters, and a few white seamen slid down on board, and Sayward leaned over the reeling taffrail above. "If there's anything suspicious, pull off for your lives," he said. "It means confiscation and Siberia, if we're caught."

The oars dipped and the boats shot away across the long smooth sea-slopes, the Mate staring hard into the streaks of moonlit vapour that divided them from the shore, while the boom of the surf grew louder, and the din from the crowded rookeries almost deafened his ears. "We'll all be ground up pretty small unless we can find the end of Two Fathom Reef and land behind it," he said; and then the way of the boat was rudely checked, as

giant streamers of floating kelp, which in these seas grows up out of forty feet of water, wreathed about her bows. But the men bent their backs until the stout oars cracked, and, driving through the tough sea-tangle, she shot ahead again, close past a spouting smother of white on the end of a sunken ledge.

"That should break the weight of the rollers," said the Mate; and a big black sea rose up behind them, foamed across the ledge, and swung the boats aloft. Then there was a cry of "Give way together, all you're worth!" and the light craft drove inshore, the froth boiling a foot high over either gunwale, and the oars ripping through the water. A few moments later a spouting of foam half-buried the boats, as with a thunderous crash the partly-broken roller hurled itself upon the beach, and the keels ground harshly into the shingle. The crews were out in a moment, waist deep in the dragging back-wash, and ere the next sea came smoking in their craft were run up high and dry.

Loosening the long knives in their belts, and gripping hand-spike and rifle, they crept quietly up a slope of rock, smooth-scarped and polished by the passage of countless seals.

The Mate well knew the risk he ran, and was by no means easy in his mind. If a party of Russian hunters, the rightful owners of the ground, had already landed, they might be shot down every man of them, for there is little doubt that the seal-poacher meets with rough and ready justice at times. Occasionally these free-lances of the ocean, who may only kill seals in open water, carry a well-stocked armoury on board, and weather-beaten skippers have been heard to boast of beating off cruisers' boats in open fight. It is rumoured that in 1892 some of the schooners vigorously resisted at-

tempts at seizure, and then, as now, the independent sealer was a rankling thorn in the side of British, Russian, and American diplomatists.

The Caribou's crew, however, did not approach the resounding rookery. In the first place, the seven-foot sea-catch, or bull-seal, is a dangerous beast to meddle with on the ground he has fought so hard for; in the second, his fur has generally been hopelessly torn and rent in the fray, and a sealer seldom molests the breeding amphibians if he can obtain any others. They followed the broad seal-road instead which led away inland, until the watery moonlight fell on a legion, perhaps a thousand strong, of curious, flopping objects dragging themselves over the ground. These were the *holluschakie*, or bachelor seals, too young as yet to enter the lists and fight with the older bulls for a place in the rookery. For three months they would flounder about the ledges and dive in the spouting surf, and then depart to scour the wide Pacific from Kamchatka to Cape Horn, never touching dry land again until such as escaped thrasher-whale and basking shark should return next year, full-grown, breeding-seals. Meanwhile they must herd apart, and avoid the rookeries on peril of their lives.

At a signal from the Mate the men spread out, and a few moments later with a muffled roar the legion turned round and headed back towards the sea, dragging themselves along with heads three feet in the air at a curious, lumbering lope, until at the end of a hundred yards or so many fell panting to the earth. With practised eyes the Siwash picked out the most promising victims and hemmed them in, letting the rest wobble painfully away; and it is curious that, while the fur-seal will tear an unarmed man to pieces in a rookery, anywhere else it may be driven

like a sheep. Then the butchery began. Hand-spike and rifle-butt fell like flails on the rounded heads, crushing in the thin skulls as though they were cardboard, and soon the hollow beneath the rocks echoed with the sound of thudding blows, the piping of half-killed seals, and the hoarse shouts of the Siwash as they drove the stragglers in. The men's breath hung like steam about them in the nipping air, and the rank odour of the jelly-blubber, which lies beneath the *holluschak's* skin, was almost too much at times even for the Mate's accustomed nostrils.

In a few hours' time a winnow of limp and furry bodies stretched away into the darkness, and the panting men flung themselves down upon the stones, aching in every joint. The Mate's right arm felt heavy as lead, and his sleeve was soaked with blood to the shoulder, while the perspiration dripped down into his eyes. But his share of the work was done, for now there remained only the task of skinning the seals before the daylight came, and this was the Indians' business. So he curled up under the lee of a boulder, watching the wild blood-stained figures ply the glinting knives, and sucking at his pipe, until the sea-fog closed down again and blotted out the moonlight. The Mate shivered as the dank wreathes drove past him before a bitter breeze, but later he found cause to bless both fog and wind.

At last the work was done, and thrice the crew went backwards and forwards to the beach bearing bundles of reeking skins. As their feet clattered upon the shingle for the last time a hoarse murmur ran from man to man, and the Mate involuntarily clenched his hands, as the strident roar of chain-cable grinding through a hawse-pipe struck on his ears, warning him that a Russian cruiser, or

sealer, had let go her anchor in the bay. "Down with the boats! For heaven's sake be handy!" he cried, and the men obeyed readily; they well understood the need for haste. The keels ground down the shingle, and a sea broke with a thunderous roar along the beach, spouting aloft across a jutting fang of rock, and swirling far up the strand. "Launch!" cried the Mate again and sinewy hands tightened their grip along the gunwale, as thrusting with might and main Indian and white man waded into the hissing backwash. The water rose from knee to waist, cold with the chill of the northern ice, and the shingle slipped and rattled beneath their feet with the suction of the outgoing sea. "Stand by the oars,—away you go!" and wild figures dripping with water and blood and grease swung themselves on board. The oars splashed madly, and when the Mate and a line of panting men scrambled to dry land again, the boat leaped half her length out of water as she met the incoming roller, and slid out of sight into the hollow beyond.

The second was dispatched in a similar way, and then the Mate leaned against a boulder to recover breath, straining his ears to catch some sign of what might be happening in the fog that rolled down thicker and thicker across the bay. But only the uproar from the rookery and the booming of the surf rang in his throbbing ears, and an icy breeze blew the sea-smoke in his face. The two boats had vanished into the mist and he could not even hear their oars.

"There's ticklish work before you now, men," he said; "and unless you launch that boat handy, daylight will see us all on our way to a log-house prison at Peter and Paul." The crew, both brown and white, drew a long breath as they ran down the boat.

The difficulty lay in the fact that, while the previously launched craft had two whole crews to hold them up and thrust them off end-on, the men of the last had to do all the work themselves. Only those who have launched, or tried to launch a deeply-laden boat, short-handed through the surf, can quite appreciate the situation; but part of the risk may be apparent.

Again a sea foamed in, and as it swept frothing about their knees, the Mate said sharply, "Now!" Down the beach they went, rattling shingle, whirling backwash, and struggling men. The bows were soon afloat, swinging round sideways towards the land, but her heel ground and hammered into the pebbles. "Off with her—for your lives—shove!" bawled the Mate, and he clutched desperately at the stern-post as the water rose to his shoulders and the boat slid off. Dripping men flung themselves head over heels across waist and stern, and the oars dropped into the crutches with a rattle. There was no need for orders now; the crew were well used to the way of the surf, and the sight of a great black ridge rolling down upon them spoke for itself. Their boat was then heading diagonally away from the beach, and unless they could pull her round, head-on and well afloat, before that comber burst, they knew she would be flung back upside down upon them.

So the oars bent like whips, the crew strained muscle and sinew, and the Mate felt the veins tighten upon his forehead as he wrenched at the sculling oar. Round came the bows, and the boat slid away from the threatening shore. She was barely in time, for as her head swung aloft the sea curled over, and for a moment they hung, as it were poised vertically amid a boiling chaos of white. "Row—can't you row!" cried the Mate,

but his throat was cracked and dry, and the hoarse sound that issued from his lips was lost in the thunder of the sea. But skill and muscle conquered at last, and half-full of water the boat rolled down into the hollow beyond, ready to meet the next. On a steep-to beach, however, the last comber is the one to be dreaded, and, the water deepening rapidly, the ridges grew smoother and smoother, until she rose and fell on the long-backed heave of the bay. There was no sign of the other boats, but when they had drawn well out from the shore and the boom of the surf had sunk to a deep, bass roar, a musical clank of windlass-pawls came through the fog. At this each man felt his heart grow lighter, for he knew that the cautious skipper was heaving his anchor short, and only waited their coming to slip away to sea.

Suddenly there was a splash of oars, and the men ceased rowing as a boat slid out of the haze. They ceased too late, however, for the strangers came down almost on top of them, and a deep voice asked in Russian, "Have the seals arrived?" An Indian answered, "Yes," for the tongue of the Muscovite is known through all the northern seas, and, at a signal from the Mate, the blades dipped together and the boat forged ahead. But the Russian is shrewd and suspicious, as he has need to be, and the carpenters of Vladivostok build to a model which differs from that of the craftsmen of Victoria and Portland Ore. Something in the sweep of waist and sheer-line caught the watchful eyes, and a voice called sharply, "Round with her! They are stealers of the seals."

The Mate understood, and felt his nerves tingle as he wondered if the Russians carried arms; but next moment with a hasty rattle of oar-looms upon wooden tholes the boat

swept away into the haze. "They're not from a cruiser anyway, but I can't quite understand," he said. "The Russ is never easily scared; the sooner we get on board the better."

On they went, all hands pulling with might and main, until a succession of hoarse shouts fell upon their ears. The Mate wondered what they might mean. He was soon to learn, for, as he listened with anxious impatience, there was a rattle of blocks in the haze ahead, and a mass of shadowy sail-cloth stole out of the vapour.

"A second Russian! There's two of them in the bay," gasped a white seaman; the men dared scarcely breathe as they heard rather than saw the grey sea wrinkling and frothing beneath an indistinct wedge of black bows. But a hard and adventurous life had taught the Mate to grasp a situation promptly. The stranger could not reach them on that tack, he knew, and a light breeze was blowing in from the mouth of the bay where the Caribou rode towards the boats,—he could hear the grinding of her cable now and then. It would also be difficult for any sailing vessel to beat zig-zag to windward as fast as boats pulled straight by men who realised how much depended on their speed. The Russians could understand that, too, for after a summons to stop rowing had been answered by a derisive yell, a bright flash blazed across the rail, and before the ringing report died away the schooner had vanished into the fog. A clatter of blocks told that her crew were hardening in the sheets, hoping, no doubt, to reach the poachers next tack. "Unless you can make the Caribou before that fellow comes about," said the Mate grimly, "it means Vladivostok hulks or Siberia; so you had better row."

Then there ensued a desperate race.

Though they could not see their pursuers, every man knew that the Russian vessel would be very near, or sufficiently to windward to have them at her mercy, when she passed next tack. Panting and breathless, they swept the boat through the water, their short gasps joining with the rattle and jar of the rowlocks as the long blades swung to and fro, while the sea boiled up beneath the bows and gurgled away astern. "Keep it up," cried the Mate, "only keep it up!" until at last the shadowy outline of the schooner loomed dimly through the haze ahead.

The boat drove crashing alongside and the skins were flung on board. "I'm uncommonly glad you've come," said Sayward; "there's a Russian schooner let go somewhere at hand, and we got scared you had come to grief in the surf. The rest have been off ten——"

"Never mind that," broke in the Mate; "another Russian will be alongside of us in a minute or two. It's a wonder she isn't now."

"Break the anchor out,—in with the boat,—stand by headsail halliards!" cried the Skipper, and the Caribou's deck became alive with hurrying figures. With a clatter of tackle the boat ran in through the gangway; shadowy objects rose and fell about the clanking windlass, and the anchor came up to the bows amid a grinding of iron chain; the damp folds of jibs and staysail fluttered aloft, and there was a wild clatter of swinging sheet-blocks, while loose ends of ropes and lines seemed to be flying everywhere about the crowded deck. A few sharp commands followed, and order came forth out of chaos. Sayward steadied the jarring spokes of the wheel, hauling them a-weather; the thundering canvas hardened out

into swelling curves before the drag of the sheets, and swaying gently down to the chilly breeze the Caribou gathered way.

She was only just in time, for a sharp rustle of loosened sail-cloth came out of the fog as the invisible pursuer went about under her stern. Clinton Sayward laughed, as he lifted his eyes from the lighted disc of the binnacle and glanced contemptuously over the rail. "We've come out well ahead to-night," he said, "and the Caribou can sail three feet for any Russian's two." Events proved he was right, for soon the drowsy gurgle of foam, as the other schooner shouldered off the seas somewhere to leeward on a parallel course, died away, and a mocking yell of triumph rose up from the crew as the Caribou stood out alone into a misty sea.

Then, with the flickering glow of lanterns falling upon their swarthy faces, the Indians spread the skins upon the deck, carefully scraping off the adherent blubber, and rubbing them with salt. A seal-skin in its natural state, it may be said, bears no resemblance whatever to the finished article of the London shops, being covered with long and greasy coarse hair which must all be plucked out by hand before the glossy under-coat is laid bare. But at last the work was done, and when the final bundle of pelts was flung into the hold, the Mate chuckled as he said: "There'll be a waste of high-grade language when the Russians find the skinned seals in the morning." Probably there was; but by that time the Caribou was flying southwards wing and wing into the wide Pacific, and only a row of shapeless blubber-heaps remained behind for a memento of Sayward's Raid.

H. B.

THE FRENCH INVASION OF IRELAND.

I.

THE interest in the Centenary of the Rebellion of 1798, now being shown in Ireland, has naturally drawn attention to the history of that remarkable outbreak and to the causes which produced it. That history has in comparatively recent years been written with picturesque effect and much wealth of detail by Mr. Froude and Mr. Lecky, and to the essential facts collected by the industry of those historians even the most patient investigation can hope to add little. But the story of the French invasion of Mayo, which lies outside the general history of the Rebellion, has been written with rather less elaboration than the rest of the narrative, and perhaps it may be worth while to tell once more the tale of the landing at Killala. The account here given does not pretend to supersede the versions of the invasion already before the public, but it is based on a careful and independent study of the documentary authorities in the Irish State Paper Office; and the writer has had the advantage of visiting the scene of the invasion, as well as of access to unpublished diaries and letters descriptive of its incidents.

While the Rebellion which had been prepared and promoted in entire reliance on the promise of foreign assistance, in the form either of an actual invasion of England or of a descent upon Ireland on the scale of the abortive expedition to Bantry Bay, was running its brief and sanguinary course, the agents of the United Irishmen in Paris had been vainly seeking to induce the Directory to hasten the

fulfilment of its pledges. But the Directory of 1798 was not the Directory of 1796, or even of 1797. The men who had befriended Tone, and by whom the expeditions from Brest and the Texel had been undertaken and captained, were gone. Carnot, the Organiser of Victory, had been obliged to seek safety in consequence of the *coup d'état* of September 4th, 1797, which changed the composition of the Directorate, and which was the first visible sign that a power greater than the power of the Republic had arisen in the person of the commander of the Army of Italy. On the 28th of the same month Hoche, the most distinguished general, with the single exception of Buonaparte, whom the wars of the Republic had produced, had died at the head of the Army of the Rhine. With him died the one steady friend to the Irish cause, the friend whose enthusiasm was such that, as Tone mournfully notes in almost the last page of his journal, written while the Rebellion was in progress, "he would be in Ireland in a month, if he only went with his *Etat-Major* in a fishing-boat." But above all the influence of Buonaparte had become paramount; and the influence of Buonaparte was unfavourable to Ireland. "He listened but said very little," writes Tone after an interview in which Lewins, as Irish Ambassador, had represented the situation and the desires of the United Irishmen. After three interviews it remained impossible to augur anything good or bad as to his real intentions. In truth he does not seem at this time to have seriously believed in the policy of an invasion either of England or

Ireland, though he allowed the preparations to go forward. Already he was looking not to the West but to the East, and growing dazzled by the golden visions of Egypt and India. On February 23rd, 1798, after some months of seeming indecision, he addressed a letter to the Directory, pointing out that the inefficiency of the French navy must render the project inexpedient, and that, since the fleets at Brest and the Texel had failed to slip through the British blockade in the dark nights of winter, it was idle to hope for better fortune during the months of spring or summer. And thereupon he seems to have definitely abandoned all thoughts of an invasion.

Ten days later, on March 5th, in another letter he formulated his scheme for the capture of Malta and the conquest of Egypt; and on April 12th it was formally announced that it was through India and not through Ireland that the French armada, so laboriously collected at such enormous cost, was to attack England. The Army of the East was constituted; and on May 20th, the very month for which the rising in Ireland had been arranged and only three days before it actually broke out, Buonaparte left Paris for the Mediterranean.

With their treasury exhausted and their arsenals depleted by this expedition, designed for England but appropriated to Egypt, it was scarcely possible for the Directors, even had they desired it, to organise assistance for Ireland on a scale commensurate either with the hopes of the Irish leaders or with the actual requirements of such an enterprise. Yet they did not wholly repudiate their promises; they professed still to cherish the notion of an invasion, and they still appeared to lend a ready ear to the representations of Lewens and

Tone. It is unfortunate that just at this period we lose the vivid commentary of Tone, who had spent May and June at Rouen and Havre with the Army of England, as it was called, and whose journal ends with his arrival on June 30th in Paris, whither he had moved from Havre to consult with the Minister of Marine. But there is little difficulty in following the course of the negotiations. On the outbreak of the Rebellion Lewens had written to the Directory reminding them that the Irish Committee had raised the standard of rebellion in reliance on the formal promise which he had conveyed, on the part of the citizen Merlin, that France would make the independence of Ireland the condition of any peace with England, describing the progress of the insurrection, and the strength of the English garrison, and indicating five thousand troops of all arms with thirty thousand muskets, artillery and munitions of war in proportion, as the force necessary to support the movement. As a result of this demand, and in recognition of their engagement to the United Irishmen, the Directory determined to equip rapidly an expedition designed on the plan of that of 1796. Three squadrons were to be fitted out at Dunkirk, Brest, and Rochefort, the first, under Kilmaine, to convey the munitions of war for the whole army, the second and third to carry the soldiers and to be commanded respectively by Generals Chérin and Humbert. Chérin declined the command, which was subsequently conferred on General Hardy.

Want of money, a feeble organisation, and possibly a lack of sincerity in their preparations, caused unexpected delay in the equipment of the fleet; but at length, on July 30th, Bruix, the Minister of Marine, addressed the following despatch to General Hardy, to whom the supreme

command of the expedition had been allotted in preference to Humbert.

The executive Directory is busily engaged in arranging to send help to the Irish who have taken up arms to sever the yoke of British rule. It is for the French Government to second the efforts of a brave people who have too long suffered under oppression. It is the intention of the Directory to send troops, arms, and ammunition to Ireland, by different routes but simultaneously. Twelve small ships are to leave the ports of Dunkirk, Calais, and Boulogne, carrying artillery, muskets, and powder, and having on board also a few Irishmen who are anxious to rejoin their countrymen. At Rochefort a squadron of three frigates is ready to set sail; and at Brest the Directory has fitted out a squadron, composed of one line-of-battle ship and six frigates, commanded by Admiral Bompard, which will carry the staff of the army of Ireland.

Full of confidence in your valour, your talents, and your enthusiasm for liberty, the Executive Directory, while awaiting the arrival of General Chérin, has charged you with the provisional command of the army of Ireland. Admiral Bompard will receive detailed instructions as to the route he is to follow. He has orders to disembark at Killala, Sligo, or Donegal.

In addition to these instructions Hardy was provided with proclamations addressed to the Irish peasantry, which had already been drawn up in English, and some of which, bearing the signature of Kilmaine, were subsequently distributed pretty generally in Mayo, notwithstanding that Kilmaine never set foot in Ireland. Hardy's orders concluded with the following statement of the political objects of the expedition and of the means by which they were to be effected.

It is most important to take every possible means to arouse the public spirit of the country, and particularly to foster sedulously its hatred of the English name. You will neglect no opportunity of making known the crimes which an odious Government has committed or may seek to commit in Ireland. It is needful too that you should maintain the most stringent disci-

pline among your troops, who should serve as a model for the Irish levies, and impress upon your comrades that they should look on the Irish as their brothers, as citizens persecuted by a tyrannical Government, the enemy of every free man, and that, fighting for the same cause, they should be united by the same ties and the same sentiments. The Executive Government, citizen General, is persuaded that you will justify its confidence by your conduct of the important mission with which you are charged. There has never been an expedition whose result might more powerfully affect the political situation in Europe, or could more advantageously assist the Republic. May your success be commensurate with my good wishes in your behalf, and bring to a people too long the victims of despotism the blessings of liberty and equality.

Despite this imposing language it is difficult to believe that the Directory were really in earnest. It is certain at least that, while they issued orders, they withheld the means of complying with them. Neither Hardy nor Humbert was supplied with funds to pay his soldiers, nor, although it was intended that the two fleets should start simultaneously, had any date been fixed for their departure. In these circumstances Hardy remained in the roadstead of Brest patiently awaiting an order from the Treasury (which never came) for 135,000 francs. But his second in command, less patient and more resourceful, was not to be hindered by the parsimony or poverty of his Government. He succeeded in obtaining an advance of 47,000 francs from the paymaster at Rochefort, who was accommodating enough to supply him without awaiting a formal order from the Treasury at Paris; and having thus supplied himself he set sail from Aix on August 6th. The expedition consisted of three frigates, the *Concorde* (44 guns), the *Franchise* (44 guns), and the *Médée* (38 guns). Distributed on board these vessels were an army of one thousand and thirty-eight men with sixty-two officers.

The General himself was on board the *Concorde*.

Humbert was not only, as was shown by his conduct in thus taking the initiative, a man of vigorous and self-reliant will, but a soldier of experience and proved ability. He was indeed a characteristic product of the Revolution, his career being in many respects typical of that of the many soldiers to whom the Revolution and its opportunities brought fame and fortune. If his knapsack did not chance to hold a Marshal's bâton that was the fault, less of his ability or his services than of the chance which, as he approached that summit of a French soldier's ambition, threw him across the path of Buonaparte. The son of a small farmer in Lorraine, Jean Joseph Amable Humbert was born in 1767 at Rouvrey. At the age of seventeen certain youthful indiscretions had obliged him to leave the employment of a cloth-merchant to whom he was apprenticed. After wandering from one town to another in various capacities, he had set up as a dealer in rabbit and goat skins, to supply the glove-factories of Lyons. At the outbreak of the Revolution he had been the first to join one of the volunteer regiments raised in the Vosges, to the command of which he quickly raised himself by a combination of republican zeal and military efficiency. Thenceforward his progress was rapid. He received a command under Hoche in the army which was sent to effect the pacification of La Vendée, and which did so after one of the most sanguinary and merciless campaigns of even that sanguinary era. By 1794 he had reached the rank of General of Brigade. In Hoche's expedition he had been placed in command of the Legion of France and, sailing on board the battleship *Les Droits des Hommes*, had distinguished himself by his personal valour in an engagement with two

English vessels which intercepted his retreat. So badly did the vessel fare between storm and shell that of fourteen hundred men only four hundred escaped with their lives. His experience in La Vendée had taught him how formidable a sturdy and disaffected peasantry might make itself to a civil Government, and he seems to have believed that nothing but the leadership of a disciplined army was necessary to the success of an insurrectionary movement in Great Britain. Under this persuasion he had in 1797 suggested to Carnot and his colleagues the desirability of organising an expedition to Scotland or Cornwall, which, taking advantage of the disaffection in the English navy might, he thought, achieve great successes. Thus, when an expedition was decided on by the Directory, Humbert, particularly as Hoche was no more, seemed marked out for its control. But his fierce and violent passions had earned him many enemies, and in official circles had inspired some distrust; and he was in consequence designated only for the post of second in command. Of his appearance and manners a graphic description has been left us by Bishop Stock, to whose admirable narrative of the expedition constant reference will be made in these pages.

Of good height and shape, in the full vigour of life, prompt to decide, quick in execution, apparently master of his art, you could not refuse him the praise of a good officer, while his physiognomy forbade you to like him as a man. His eye, which was small and sleepy (the effect probably of much watching), cast a sidelong glance of insidiousness and even of cruelty; it was the eye of a cat, preparing to spring on her prey. His education and manner were indicative of a person sprung from the lowest orders of society, though he knew how (as most of his countrymen can do) to assume, where it was convenient, the deportment of a gentleman. For learning he had scarcely enough to enable him

to write his name. His passions were furious, and all his behaviour seemed marked with the characters of roughness and violence. A narrower observation of him however served to discover that much of this roughness was the result of art, being assumed with the object of exhorting by terror a ready compliance with his commands.

The army of which this hardy soldier was the leader was of like quality with its general. One half of the troops had served under Buonaparte in the Italian campaign; the remainder were from the army of the Rhine, and had served under Jourdan, Moreau, and Hoche. They were for the most part young men and, except the grenadiers, not of very striking physique; yet men who, from their grim experience of five years' incessant war, might already be counted veterans. At the siege of Metz, in the winter of 1797, they had slept on the ground in holes dug four feet deep through the snow, and throughout the campaign the toil had been so incessant that one of their officers averred that he had not once removed his leathern garments for a whole twelvemonth. In this hard school they had been trained to habits of the most perfect discipline, temperance, and simplicity, and could live contentedly on the plainest fare.

Of Humbert's officers none had reached, or were destined to reach remarkable eminence, but all of them were efficient subordinates, and Sarazin, the second in command, a brilliant one. Among them were three or four Irishmen, who included Matthew Tone, brother of the more celebrated Theobald, and Sullivan, nephew of Madgett, Tone's friend at the French Foreign Office, the latter being the only one of the Irish refugees accompanying the expedition who made good his escape when all was over.

Two other Irishmen, holding

command in the French army and attached to Humbert's immediate staff, deserve to be specially noticed. Bartholomew Teeling was the son of a Roman Catholic linen-merchant of Lisburn, near Belfast, who having taken an active part in the proceedings of the Catholic Convention of 1793 had, four years later, been arrested and thrown into prison for treason. Teeling, then a very young man of prepossessing manners and appearance who had received a good education, had in 1796 proceeded to France as one of the emissaries to solicit French assistance for the United Irish movement. His mission having become known to the authorities at home he had deemed it unsafe to return, and had then accepted a commission in the French army. He had served in La Vendée under Hoche, where he had become acquainted with Humbert. Had the expedition succeeded in reaching Donegal and pushed forward into Ulster as was intended, Teeling would have been particularly useful to his commander from his knowledge of the province. As it was, though he had no special local knowledge, he was active as an interpreter, displayed conspicuous gallantry both at Collooney and Ballinamuck, and, according to the testimony of his chief, was unsparing throughout the campaign in his endeavours to protect the lives and property of Protestants. A witness for the prosecution at the court-martial before which he was tried deposed to his conspicuous humanity, and said that, when some rebels at Castlebar had endeavoured to excuse their outrages by saying they had only injured Protestants, Teeling had warmly exclaimed that he knew no distinction between Protestant and Catholic, and would permit none.

Accompanying the expedition in

the capacity of interpreter, and as such attached by a special commission to the General's staff, was Henry O'Keon, son of a cowherd of Lord Tyrawly and a native of the district in which the invaders ultimately landed. O'Keon had left Ireland at a very early age with such smattering of education as a hedge-school could afford. Making his way to Nantes he had, after studying divinity there for some years, taken orders as a priest, and in 1789 had already passed some years as a French *curé*. The Revolution had of course stripped him of his preferment; but accommodating himself to circumstances he exchanged his cassock for a sword. Entering the army of the Republic as a private, he had by 1798 reached the rank of captain. He was a fat, jolly, good-humoured man, with ruddy countenance and thick black eyebrows running into one another. Of indifferent morals and accommodating conscience, he yet displayed, like Teeling, a humane and tolerant disposition, exerting himself on every occasion to restrain the violence of patriotic, and still more of religious, fervour against the loyalists, a humanity which stood him in good stead when, taken prisoner by the British troops at the re-capture of Killala, he found his assumed French nationality an unavailing plea before the court-martial. The selection of O'Keon as interpreter helps to explain Humbert's choice of Killala as a landing-place, in preference to either Sligo or Donegal. O'Keon was almost ignorant of English, retaining only just enough of the language to make himself intelligible; but his father lived near Ballina, and he was himself well acquainted with the whole district and a proficient in its vernacular. It was therefore natural that Humbert, whose instructions allowed him a

latitude of choice, should select as the scene of his first effort a country in which he could rely on the assistance of O'Keon's local knowledge and intimate acquaintance with the dialect and habits of the people.

In other respects, indeed, the county of Mayo was a district little favourable to the success of such an enterprise as that in which Humbert had so readily embarked. The United Irish movement had at first progressed but slowly in the West, and it had given the leaders no little trouble to develop it. Of the four provinces Connaught had, throughout the whole period of the agitation, been the least disturbed and had given the least concern to the Government. The extent to which the progress of the conspiracy was impeded by the jealousy and rivalries of the local Roman Catholic gentry, some of whom, influenced by the Hon. Denis Browne, brother to Lord Altamont and Member for the County, were desirous of acting independently of their brethren in the east of Ireland and of forming a separate Catholic petition, had obliged Wolfe Tone to undertake in October, 1792, what he describes in his journal as a "peregrination to convert the natives of Connaught, and more especially of Galway and Mayo, to the true political faith." Tone had then attended meetings in Ballinrobe and Castlebar, but had met with little encouragement, finding the local leaders very suspicious of each other. On the Catholic Committee the western delegates acted uniformly with the more moderate section of that body, and displayed little sympathy with the violent measures recommended by its vehement secretary.

The province seems to have remained outside the United Irish organisation down to 1796, though Defenderism was rife among the peasantry. But by 1797 many recruits had been en-

rolled among the lower orders, and these were drawn exclusively from the ranks of the Roman Catholics. At the meeting of the Ulster Provincial Committee of the United Irishmen on September 14th, 1797, it was reported that Connaught was in a fair state of organisation. This change in the disposition of the Mayo peasantry, and the exclusively Catholic complexion of the movement which then began to spread, was mainly due to the immigration of large numbers of the Roman Catholic population of Armagh and Tyrone, many of whom had been forced into exile by the outrages of the Peep of Day Boys which followed the defeat of the Defenders at the Battle of the Diamond. As many as four thousand of these people are said to have immigrated to Sligo and Mayo. By the admission even of those who were not likely to exaggerate facts in their favour, they were for the most part decent and industrious and, from their skill in the linen industry and their general superiority in intelligence to the peasantry of Connaught, their arrival was welcomed by the proprietors. The majority of these immigrants appeared to be free from active disloyalty and readily took the oath of allegiance; but their presence, and the tales of oppression which they brought with them naturally inflamed their Roman Catholic neighbours, while those among them who had been actively engaged in Defenderism in their old homes as naturally became centres of sedition in their new surroundings. They brought with them too the habits of organisation with which they had become familiar in Ulster; and political clubs and meetings soon became frequent in the district. But above all they brought with them a terror of Orangeism, spreading the most absurd rumours as to the malignant and murderous intentions of the Protes-

tants, who, they averred, had entered into a conspiracy to massacre the entire Roman Catholic population.

So far as regarded Connaught, at any rate, these assertions were without the slightest foundation, and it is certain that down to the actual outbreak of the rebellion Orangeism itself had gained little if any hold in Mayo. The Bishop of Killala had denounced the institution, and on the very day of the invasion was entering a protest in his primary visitation-charge against the first sentence of the Orange oath, "I am not a Roman Catholic," which appeared to him intolerant and unciliatory. The vehemence of the exiled Catholics, who attributed the persecution they had suffered mainly to Presbyterians, had, however, by a not unnatural process, led to the growth of the institution among the Presbyterian community of Multifarragh, which had been brought from Ulster to Connaught earlier in the century by the Earl of Arran.

Though these statements of the exiles were accepted and propagated by disaffected priests, it certainly appears that these slanders upon Protestantism, and especially the confusion of the terms Protestant and Orange as though they were synonymous, were due less to the priests than to these refugees themselves, who perhaps were hardly to be blamed for imputing to the Protestants of Mayo the treatment which had been meted out to them by the Protestants of Armagh. It is worth noting that these Ulster Roman Catholics, better educated and with a higher standard of comfort than the Catholics of the same class in the West, while they were among the most energetic supporters of the French, declined to serve with the Connaught peasantry and insisted on forming a separate corps.

But, these religious disturbances notwithstanding, the general condi-

tion of the country continued down to a late period to be, at least to all outward appearance, orderly and loyal. Denis Browne, writing on December 30th, 1796, from Westport, informed the Government that the country was quiet and loyal beyond expectation, and that the emigrant Northerners were quiet and inoffensive. The reports of the Orange terrorism spread by the latter had indeed, according to Browne, produced in some parts of the country a curious and incongruous effect. "The inhabitants," he wrote, "of this part of Mayo have connected the French and the Presbyterians of the North, who, they hear, invited the French over; consequently they have transferred a portion of their hatred to the enemy, who they are persuaded are coming with their Northern allies to drive them from their habitations and properties; and so strongly does this operate, that I am persuaded they would beat the French out of this country with stones."

Another circumstance which continued to sustain the impression that the West remained loyal was the success of the yeomanry movement in Connaught. As many as eight corps of cavalry, and a substantial number of infantry had been raised. These, no doubt, were recruited mainly from the Protestant farming-class which was then much more numerous in Mayo than it is to-day, but they also contained a far from inconsiderable number of Roman Catholics; and there is no warrant for believing, as alleged by Musgrave, that, down to 1797 at all events, these people were otherwise than cordial in their allegiance. The general confidence that was felt in the loyalty of the district, in its ability to resist external attack, and in its immunity from internal disturbance, is plainly indicated by the language held as late as January

6th, 1798, by the Protestant clergy whose duty it was to preach at the services held in all the churches on the occasion of a general thanksgiving for the victories of Cape St. Vincent and Camperdown. On that occasion Dr. Neligan, a well-known clergyman and an active magistrate in the neighbourhood of Ballina, preaching before the Ardnaree Infantry delivered himself thus: "It is a pleasing source of consolation that, while some parts of the kingdom are secretly employed in private machinations against the State and in preparing to assist a foreign enemy with the means for our destruction, the inhabitants of this neighbourhood, actuated by the purest motives of patriotism and loyalty, have boldly and openly come forward under the banners of Government and arrayed themselves in arms under respectable leaders determined to support their King, their constitution, their laws, and their properties against the foreign invaders of their rights and liberties."

It is evident, however, that the confidence of the Government and its friends in the loyalty of the Mayo peasantry was imprudently exaggerated, and that throughout the early part of 1798 a spirit of active sedition had made itself felt among the people. It is pretty plain, too, that the local leaders had been instructed to expect and prepare for the arrival of the French in their district. Meetings began to be frequent in the neighbourhood of Ballina, and rumours of midnight drilling reached the ears of the authorities. Dr. Neligan, having in the summer procured the arrest, in consequence of information secretly conveyed to him, of a pedlar named Reynolds, had obtained a confession of a widely extended plot, together with the names of the leading persons immediately concerned. But the country was so denuded of military

that it was felt unsafe to attempt any very vigorous measures to explode the conspiracy. A few of the leaders were arrested and sent to Sligo for examination before General Taylor; but they were discharged at the instance of the local magistrate who seemed satisfied of the groundlessness of the charges, though one of the prisoners at once developed into an active insurgent so soon as the Rebellion broke out.

The magistrates were still further thrown off their guard by the eagerness with which the oath of allegiance was taken; and so anxious did the people appear to give this guarantee of loyalty that in June a committee was formed by the Magistracy under the presidency of the Bishop of Killala for the taking of the oaths by the Roman Catholic priests and their flocks; and the country being divided into districts, the oath was administered on Sunday after mass in all the parishes, and was taken almost universally. It seems certain, however, that in more than one instance this eagerness of priest and people to testify to their loyalty originated in their anxiety to prevent, by an appearance of devotion to the constitution, the quartering of any large garrison in their county; and many of them not only encouraged their flocks to join the insurrection when it broke out, but were active in assisting the invaders. But to this conduct there were some notable exceptions. The elder clergy shared as a rule the abhorrence of the French Revolution which characterised their bishops. Father Conway of Ardagh and Father Grady of Rotterea not only exhorted their flocks to continue in their allegiance, but braved the insult and assaults of their parishioners in defence of their principles.

If the organisation of disaffection in Mayo had thus assumed a religious

complexion, the fires of religious intolerance were unchecked by the presence of any considerable body of Protestants among either the leaders or the rank and file of the movement. The United Irish Organisation, as the testimony of Wolfe Tone proves, proceeded in Connaught almost entirely on a basis of Defenderism, and was thus exclusively Catholic. And whatever might have been the disposition of a few among the local Protestant gentry prior to 1798, the burning of Scullabogue and the massacre on Wexford Bridge effectually deterred any of them from actively embracing the insurgent cause, while they inevitably inflamed the ardour, and no doubt also the vengeful intolerance, of the Protestant yeomanry. So marked was the sectarian character of the disturbance in Connaught that in Mayo only two Protestants joined the movement during the whole progress of the invasion, and these were men of bad character who signalised their defection from their loyalty to their sovereign by abjuring their Church. Not only did the Protestant gentry of Connaught hold resolutely aloof from the agitation, but the number of Roman Catholics of position and respectability who came forward was singularly small. Indeed no feature of the insurrection in Connaught is more remarkable than the distrust of the invasion and its consequences which was shown by the better sort of the Roman Catholics of Mayo, Galway, and Sligo. Of the few who did come forward only two or three were men of any substance or of much personal worth.

Such was the situation and disposition of the province of Connaught, and especially of the county of Mayo which was to be the immediate scene of the invasion, when, on the morning of August 22nd, 1798, Humbert and his fleet after a voyage of fifteen days,

during which they had been beating almost continually against contrary winds, reached the coast of Ireland, and abandoning the alternatives of Sligo and Donegal, dropped anchor in the Bay of Killala.

On the northern shore of Mayo, but twenty miles from the north-western extremity of Ireland, and pleasantly situated at the head of the wide bay to which it has given its name, lies the little town of Killala. Never an imposing place, it has dwindled within the present century, and more particularly since the famine, to little more than a village. Yet small and poor as it is to-day, Killala, a century ago, was a town of some importance, the port for the not inconsiderable grain-trade of the neighbouring district, and, from the circumstance of its being the seat of a bishopric, serving as an outpost of civilisation on the frontiers of the wild West. Few places in that part of Ireland are more rich in traditions and memorials of the past. The conversion of Aladth, or Aulay, the chief of a clan inhabiting part of what is now the barony of Tyrawley, and the founding of a church near the cell to which he retired, are among the best authenticated traditions of St. Patrick's missionary work; and the Cathedral Church of Killala (*Cill Aladth*) has for thirteen centuries commemorated this conversion of the pagan warrior into the Christian anchorite.

The diocese embraces the wild baronies of Erris and Tyrawley, the former of which still remains perhaps the most primitive district in the three kingdoms. Secure in its wild fastnesses of rock, torrent, and bog, guarded on its outer borders by a stormy and inhospitable coast, and to the south and east by a chain of wild mountains and wilder lakes, it has remained almost to our own day remote and unvisited, untravelled and trackless as the wilds of Lyonesse,

— A waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the
world.

The reports of such adventurers as penetrated these solitudes from time to time were not likely to encourage travellers. When Bishop Pococke, in 1752, made his tour through the island, he found Erris but little changed from the days of the first bishop of the Irish Church. A few ruins of ancient fortifications seemed to attest the incursions of Danish invaders, and the remains of a small Protestant colony planted by the Cromwellian owners of the barony, which has since been absorbed in its surroundings, were still to be met with. Arthur Young describes the astonishment with which the people of Erris, in their rare visits to more civilised districts, viewed the unknown marvels of trees and shrubs; and it was not until 1820 that the country was rendered accessible to even a two-wheeled vehicle. Killala, however, situated at the eastern side of the less primitive barony of the two, and the seat since shortly after the Reformation of the united dioceses of Killala and Achonry, stood on a more fertile spot. Its pleasant fields and pastures had ministered in old days to communities of monks of whom the abbeys of Moyne and Rosserk are still the venerable memorials, and in more modern times had furnished the endowment of a bishopric which, though one of the poorest in the Irish Church, was still a desirable piece of preferment, forming the first rung in the ladder of episcopal promotion, though its comparatively slender income and remote situation caused the occupants of the see to ascend as rapidly as they could. In the eighteenth century alone there were no fewer than thirteen bishops of Killala, of whom only three died in the see; and an old lady, living in

1805, is said to have been able to count as many as eleven prelates who had ruled the diocese within her memory. Nevertheless the bishops of Killala, despite these rapid translations, did their work, the later prelates at all events, in a manner which compares favourably with the record of many of their richer brethren of the Irish Establishment in the last century; and they have left pleasant memories behind them. They resided in the town, to which their presence lent importance and their incomes prosperity. Since the amalgamation of the see in 1834 with the Archdiocese of Tuam it has become a saying among the inhabitants of the decaying town, where the old palace is now the workhouse, that "the luck went out of Killala with the bishops."

In August, 1798, Killala Castle, the see-house of the diocese, was tenanted by the penultimate bishop of Killala, Dr. Joseph Stock, to whose presence in the town at the period of the invasion we are indebted for the fullest, most interesting, and most authentic description of the character of the French army and of the episodes which marked its occupation of Killala and the adjacent country.

Dr. Stock was a man not only of learning and piety, but, as his narrative shows, of tolerant and humane disposition, as well as of shrewd observation. Unlike the majority of his contemporaries on the Irish episcopal bench, he had been born, bred, and educated in Ireland, and his preference had been earned by solid performances. Far from ranking among Swift's "highwaymen-bishops" he belonged rather to the type of "Greek play bishops," so common in the Anglican Church in the early part of the nineteenth century and so rare at the end of it. The son of a hosier in Dublin, whose family had been settled in the Irish metropolis for more than

one generation, Stock had achieved a distinguished career in Trinity College, Dublin, of which he became a Fellow. While in residence at the University he produced editions of the classics which long remained in vogue; and having retired upon a college living he became head-master of Enniskillen, then, as now, one of the most important schools in Ireland. Even these distinctions, however, might have failed to win him a bishopric, had he remained without advantageous family connections; but a wife who bore him eleven children brought him also the means of supporting them. This lady was a sister-in-law of Archbishop Newcome, and during Dr. Newcome's brief tenure of the Primacy, Stock was appointed to the see of Killala. Unlike some of his episcopal brethren before and since, the Bishop's activity of mind was not exhausted by his promotion. He only exchanged the literary labours of a school-master for those appropriate to a divine; and while awaiting his own translation to some richer see, he occupied his leisure with a metrical translation of Job. It was as well perhaps that he should thus have preached to himself the virtue of patience, for he had to wait twelve years for his advancement to Waterford. Lord Holland in his *MEMOIRS OF THE WHIG PARTY* ascribes this delay in recognising the Bishop's undoubted merit to the dissatisfaction which his kindly testimony to the moderation and humanity of the French troops inspired in official circles at a time when Nelson's advice to his midshipmen to "hate the Frenchman as you do the devil" conveyed the popular view of our enemies.

On the morning of August 22nd Dr. Stock and his guests at Killala Castle, where several of the clergy of the diocese were assembled for the Bishop's first visitation, intended to be held on the day following, descried

three large vessels in the bay carrying English colours. Eager to see a British man-of-war the Bishop's sons, Edwin and Arthur Stock, lads of nineteen and sixteen, threw themselves into a fishing-boat along with the port-surveyor, and pulling to the largest of the ships speedily found themselves prisoners on board the French frigate *Concorde*. The fleet was in the act of anchoring, and the army preparing to disembark. The elder of the brothers, happening to be a proficient in the French language, was quickly brought ashore to act as an interpreter to the invaders, who at four o'clock received orders to disembark. Sarazin, the Adjutant-General, with the grenadiers was the first to reach the shore, and was at once sent forward to attack Killala. The rest of the troops quickly followed, and leaving only a small force at Kileummin to land the stores from the ships and to distribute among the peasants, who flocked to the shore, a supply of arms and uniforms for such as might be found willing to join the Army of Ireland, Humbert hurried to the support of his subordinate. Marching by Palmerstown, some three miles from Killala, and crossing a considerable stream, the Owenmore, at that place, they advanced quickly towards Killala in the dusk of a fine August evening.

The Bishop of Killala, with the Dean and others of the clergy, and a couple of officers belonging to the regiment of Carabiniers quartered at Ballina, were just rising to join the ladies after dinner, when a mounted messenger dashed breathlessly up to the castle gates with the alarming intelligence that the French were upon them. Captain Kirkwood of the local yeomanry, the Tyrawley Cavalry, had been apprised a little earlier by a fisherman of the enemy's landing; and, aided by a small party of regulars belonging to the Prince of Wales's Fen-

cibles, a regiment lately stationed in the district, he hastily took up a position, with not more than fifty men, at the top of the street leading to the castle. From the centre of Killala, near what is called the Steeple Hill, on which stands a very perfect example of the ancient Round Towers of Ireland, three roads diverge to the south, west, and north-east. The last of these wound by the cathedral and the church-yard wall past the castle towards Ballina; by the second the French advanced. On reaching the outskirts of the town, Humbert detached a party across the meadows under the guidance of an Irish recruit named Kerrigan, who was subsequently given a commission in the Irish army, to occupy the southern road, and then ordered Sarazin to charge with his grenadiers. The position taken up by Kirkwood was a strong one; but the yeomanry, unaccustomed to actual fighting, were unable to withstand the onset of the French bayonets. After firing a volley which wounded some of the enemy, but failed to check their progress, they fled precipitately down the road towards Ballina, leaving their commander, with Lieutenant Sills of the Fencibles, and Dr. Ellison the Rector of Castlebar, a *ci-devant* cavalry officer of the British army, to make with a few others a brief and ineffectual resistance. These officers were quickly forced back to the castle gates, where they were obliged to surrender themselves prisoners. Thus, after little more than a few minutes' skirmishing, Killala, with its castle and bishop, was in the hands of the enemy. There was no loss of life on the French side, but of the yeomanry two were killed; one of them, the elderly and gouty apothecary of the town, receiving a bullet in his head as he attempted to gain the shelter of his own house. Among the wounded were the valiant Dr. Ellison, slightly injured by a shot

in the heel, and two French officers. Nineteen yeomen were taken prisoners and ordered into confinement in the castle, which was at once occupied; but the Fencibles, with the exception of Lieutenant Sills, their commander, made good their retreat to Ballina, some seven miles distant.

Most of the clergy assembled for the visitation had meantime escaped as best they could, some of them only doing so with very considerable difficulty. Charles Seymour, afterwards the well-known Protestant Evangelist of Connemara, has told how, finding himself in the midst of the French troops in the streets of Killala, and knowing not how otherwise to avoid being taken prisoner, he made the best use of the one word of French he was acquainted with by shouting as he waved his arms *Français, Français*, with pretended enthusiasm.

The fighting over, General Humbert, accompanied by Edwin Stock, quickly appeared at the castle gates. The French commander had taken no active part in the struggle in the town, but arriving immediately after he, with somewhat magnificent exaggeration of the achievement of his lieutenant, promoted Sarazin to be a General of Brigade upon the spot. This done he demanded to see M. l'Évêque. The Bishop had been urged to fly in the company of the Carabinier officers, who, on hearing the news of the French advance, had ridden back to their quarters at full speed; but he had determined, wisely as the event proved, to stand his ground. He had quietly awaited in his garden the issue of the French attack, and promptly appearing in response to Humbert's summons he soon, as he puts it in his narrative, "found full employment as an interpreter, and still more as a contributor to the wants of a brave nation." A green flag, bearing the motto *Erin go*

bragh, was hoisted over the castle, which was speedily inundated by the invaders. In a few minutes the dining-room, so lately the scene of the Bishop's hospitality, was filled with French officers and their baggage, with the wounded and their surgical assistants, and with the prisoners who were ordered in for immediate examination. But, despite the confusion and disorder inevitable in such circumstances, the utmost consideration was shown to Dr. Stock. The French took possession of the ground floor, court-yard, and offices; but the Bishop and his family, with the Dean and his wife, and Dr. Ellison, were allowed to occupy unmolested the upper portion of the house, including the library.

The courtesy thus exhibited, from which, throughout the four weeks of the French occupation of the castle, there was scarcely a moment's departure, was doubtless dictated in the first instance by the expectation that the Bishop and the Protestant population of Killala generally might be induced to espouse the French cause. Humbert appears to have been possessed with the delusion which Wolfe Tone had found so difficult to dissipate in the minds of the Directory, and which had doubtless been fostered in French minds by less clear-sighted and more bombastic intriguers such as Napper Tandy, that the propertied classes in Ireland would be found willing to join the insurrectionary movement. In pursuance of this idea while Lieutenant Sills, as an officer of the British army, was ordered aboard the ships as a prisoner, Captain Kirkwood of the yeomanry was at once placed on his *parole*; and the French General, in his first conversation with the Bishop, actually intimated that there was room in the Directory of the Province of Connaught, which it was his intention to establish forthwith,

for a person of the ability and consequence of the Bishop of Killala. He evinced evident astonishment at the refusal of this overture, and indeed it was some time before the French officers could be got to understand how widely different was the episcopal standpoint.

Thus, though naturally a good deal perturbed by this martial visitation of his diocese, the Bishop had no reason to be apprehensive for the safety of his own person or that of his family and friends; though for a day or two the conduct of the General, a man of violent and uncertain temper, occasionally inspired alarm. It was at first arranged that the Bishop should accompany the French army, when they should set out for Castlebar, as a hostage for the safety of the garrison left at Killala; but when the time came his son Edwin was accepted in his stead. On the day after the landing, however, he was threatened with a more serious inconvenience. Being unable to comply with a re-

quisition of the General to procure, or cause to be procured, from the country people horses and wagons to draw the artillery and convey the stores, he was ordered on board ship for deportation to France, and was even given in charge of a corporal's guard for that purpose. The Bishop, however, was not suffered to proceed more than half a mile from the castle ere he was recalled by a messenger on horseback to receive from the General, standing on the staircase, apologies for an indignity which was offered, according to Humbert, only with the object of impressing and terrifying the populace.

Meantime, the disembarkation of the stores and artillery had been quickly completed, and on the morning of the 24th the French ships sailed out of the bay, anxious doubtless to elude the vigilance of the English squadron which was on the look-out for them.

C. LITTON FALKNER.

(To be continued.)